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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arabs To Assess Christopher Visit by End of Feb

NC2402061993 Paris AFP in English 2337 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Tunis, Feb 23 (AFP)—Arabs involved in peace talks with Israel will meet before the end of February to assess U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour to revive the stalled talks, a PLO official said Tuesday [23 February].

Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, which is indirectly involved, will send foreign ministers to the meeting, the Palestine Liberation Organization diplomatic representative in Tunis, Hakam Bal'awi, told the TAP news agency.

Bal'awi, a member of the PLO's central committee, said the ministers would also discuss efforts to repatriate some 400 Palestinians deported by Israel to south Lebanon—a crisis that prompted the suspension of the peace talks.

He did not say where the meeting would be held.

In Jerusalem, where Christopher was wrapping up his tour, Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi said the Palestinians would not return to the negotiating table until all the deportees are repatriated.

"We are not in the process of making compromises right now on the issue of deportations," said the Palestinian spokeswoman to the peace talks.

Israel has offered to let 101 of the deportees return immediately and the rest by the end of the year in a bid to kickstart the negotiations.

"Under the present conditions I don't think the peace talks will resume," she said bluntly after 10 Palestinian leaders spent 1-1/2 hours with Christopher at the U.S. consulate in East Jerusalem.

"We want to make sure that deportations cease immediately and the orders are rescinded," 'Ashrawi said. "We have to try our best to change the conditions, primarily with the deportees.

Palestinian Affairs

Syria Eager To Coordinate on Peace Process

TA2302145093 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 23 Feb 93 p 1

[By Samir Sa'd-al-Din]

[Text] Tunis—Marwan 'Abd-al-Hamid, adviser to PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, has said that during his recent visit to Damascus he perceived the Syrian leadership's eagerness to coordinate on every aspect of the peace process with the other concerned Arab parties participating in the negotiations.

'Abd-al-Hamid said that he handed over a message from 'Arafat to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. He stressed that in the event the peace talks are resumed, Damascus will support Palestinian demands and principles.

'Abd-al-Hamid added that it is expected decisions will be adopted to enhance Arab coordination during a meeting by the foreign ministers of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and the head of the PLO Political Department upon the conclusion of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region.

Hamas Reportedly Split Over Solution for Deportees

JN2302132193 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1212 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Randah Habib dispatch from Amman]

[Text] Apparently, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is split over whether or not to accept the return of the deportees in stages. According to sources close to this movement, there is a hardline, pro-Iran trend, which stresses the need for all deportees to return at the same time and rejects the principle of returning them in stages. This is opposed by a pro-Saudi trend, which calls for discussing the available solution of returning the deportees in stages so that Hamas could reap any gains from this settlement instead of leaving this to the PLO, which also accepts a reasonable solution of the deportees issue.

In any case, these sources emphasize the need to begin a dialogue between Hamas and the PLO so that Hamas could learn immediately the details of any proposals because it is the only party which is responsible for the deportees. These sources said the proposed solution would be subject to discussion, noting that Resolution 799, which stipulates the return of all the deportees, does not contain a definite mechanism for this return and therefore, the return of the deportees, even in stages, constitutes an implementation of this resolution.

Report on Split Denied

JN2302175993 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Commenting on the dispatch from our colleague Randah Habib, we received a statement by a responsible but unidentified source in the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, denying the reports that there is a split within the movement on the settlement of the deportee issue. The statement affirms that what we have reported is completely groundless, and that the Hamas stand is clear and leaves no room for interpretation; it is a meticulous commitment to the immediate return of all the deportees as stipulated in Resolution 799.

The statement we received was not signed by any Hamas official, but was attributed to a responsible source in this movement to deny Randah Habib's report.

Christopher Expected To Put Pressure on Delegation

TA2302163593 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 23 Feb 93 p 11

[Editorial: "Between Pressure and Commitments"]

[Text] Recent statements by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in which he announced that his country intends to play the role of full partner in the upcoming peace talks, have special significance in the view of the Arab parties participating in the negotiations, particularly since so far their impression of the new U.S. Administration has not been in favor of U.S. credibility. The U.S. position on finding a mechanism to implement Resolution 799 through the UN Security Council is still fresh in people's minds.

The more important aspect of his tour will begin with the arrival of the U.S. secretary in the country. According to his own assessment of the talks he held in the Arab capitals which he visited, the Arab parties are interested in resuming the peace talks. Hence, the Palestinian side's task in its dialogue with the U.S. secretary appears to be difficult.

It seems clear that the U.S. secretary is interested in restarting the negotiating process quickly. He has declared the Clinton administration's commitment to the peace process and its readiness to play the role of "full partner" in order to arrive at a political settlement. It is also clear that the secretary is interested in neutralizing the effect of the deportation operation on the resumption of the negotiating process. Therefore, he is endeavoring to find a way out that might lead some of the parties to announce their return to the negotiating table. In this context, the secretary has been uttering hints, followed by statements by members of his accompanying delegation, calling on Israel to take "alleviating" steps in the hope that this would soothe the political climate in the region, especially among Palestinians. Apparently, the Israeli Government will carry out some of these steps.

In return for this, the U.S. secretary is expected to exert "diplomatic pressure" on the Palestinians under the pretext that the available negotiating opportunity should not be wasted, pointing out that Resolution 799 is being implemented according to "the U.S. method." He might go so far as to hint again that "the train is on the verge of moving once more and will not wait for those who do not want to get on board."

We have to refer to the important task assumed by the Palestinian delegation meeting the U.S. secretary. This delegation should be clear in concentrating on the basic Palestinian principles under which the Palestinian people and their leadership entered into these negotiations. Finally, the Palestinian stance is not demanding as much as the resumption of the negotiating process as abidance by a UN resolution for which the U.S. Administration voted.

Active U.S. Involvement in Peace Talks Welcomed

TA2302185093 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 23 Feb 93 pp 1, 7

[Editorial: "Active U.S. Participation—A Positive Thing"]

[Excerpts] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Israel yesterday evening after visiting Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Lebanon. During his visit to Israel, in addition to his Israeli hosts he will meet with Palestinian dignitaries. After these meetings, Christopher will discover how deep the gap is between the Palestinian and Israeli positions. [passage omitted]

We welcome U.S. intervention even while realizing that the United States is biased in favor of its ally, Israel. The presence of another party that steers the dialogue, prevents any side from adopting inflexible positions or exceeding proper bounds, and does not allow matters to reach the collision point is a positive thing. This was proved when Kissinger intervened in the negotiations following the October War and imposed the first and second disengagements between Egypt and Israel. [passage omitted]

After touring the Arab states, Christopher said that all those states were sincere in their effort to reach settlements and peace with Israel in order to ensure security and stability for their people and focus their energies on solving economic and social problems in their countries. All the Arabs, including the Palestinians, have made many concessions for the sake of participating in the negotiations. In return, Israel still refuses to make any concession. On the contrary, it escalated its practices in the occupied Arab territories. Israel crowned its practices, which have led to the destruction of all efforts exerted since the Madrid Conference 16 months ago to build bridges of confidence between the parties, by deporting more than 400 Palestinians to Marj al-Zuhur in Lebanon. This operation has restored a lack of confidence and credibility.

The crisis created by Israel as a result of the deportation operation should convince all the parties, particularly Israel, that the United States must be a partner in the negotiations. Thus, it might prevent in the future such "rash" steps. A mere U.S. presence at the negotiating table will prevent the parties from maneuvering and wasting time over marginal issues. Moreover, the Clinton administration appears to be in a hurry to realize achievements and does not have any time to waste. Therefore, it is expected that it will exert intensive efforts to advance the peace process. However, if this U.S. Administration, which is preoccupied with

domestic issues, does not find a real readiness by the parties to advance this process and break the deadlock, it will abandon the process and put it back on hold in order to attend to other regional problems that are on the verge of exploding.

Significance of Christopher's Tour Noted

LD2302213493 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] O Brothers, the recent remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in which he announced that his country intends to play a full role in the upcoming peace negotiations have a special significance in the view of the Arab partners taking part in the negotiations, particularly because the impression those partners have formed about the new U.S. Administration is so far not in favor of American credibility. The United States attitude toward the creation of a mechanism to implement Resolution 799 through the Security Council is too near to forget.

With the arrival of the U.S. secretary in the country [as heard] the most important aspect of his tour begins. According to his assessment of his talks in the Arab capitals which he has visited, the Arab parties are concerned over the resumption of the peace negotiations. Hence, the task of the Palestinian side in its dialogue with the U.S. secretary seems strenuous. It is apparent that the U.S. secretary is concerned with a fast turning of the wheel of negotiations as he announces the commitment of President Clinton's administration to the peace process and its readiness to play the role of a full partner to reach a political settlement.

It is also apparent that the secretary is also concerned with neutralizing the consequences of the deportation operation on the resumption of the peace process. Therefore, he is being diligent to find a way out that might lead a number of partners to announce their return to the negotiating table. Within this context the Secretary makes hints, to be followed by an announcement from members of his accompanying delegation demanding that Israel should take softening steps with the hope that this will help the political atmosphere prevailing in the region and especially among the Palestinians. It seems the Israel Government will offer some of those steps.

On the other hand, the U.S. secretary is expected to exercise diplomatic pressure on the Palestinians under the pretext that the available negotiations opportunity should not be lost, and explaining that Resolution 799 has been implemented according to the American method. It might even go as far as going back to hinting that the wagon train is about to move again and it will not wait for those who do not want to get on it.

We also have to underscore the important task that falls on the shoulders of the Palestinian delegation which will meet the U.S. secretary. The delegation must be clear in focusing on the basic Palestinian principles according to which the Palestinian people and their leadership have joined these negotiations.

In conclusion, the Palestinian position does not demand much to resume the negotiation process, except the commitment to an international resolution on which the U.S. Administration had voted for full acceptance.

'Arafat Discusses Talks With King Husayn

JN2202114893 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1840 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Interview with PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat by Amman Television during 'Arafat's 17-18 February visit to Jordan—read by announcer]

[Excerpts] [Question] Mr. President, what was the gist of your talks with His Majesty King Husayn?

['Arafat] First of all and as is well known, we take pride in the continuous talks we are holding with His Majesty King Husayn, particularly at this time when we are facing major challenges. The meeting was an opportunity to review and discuss these challenges with his majesty the king prior to the arrival of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who will tour the Arab region before visiting Israel. There is no doubt that this tour was one of the main points of discussion with His Majesty King Husayn and between the Palestinian and Jordanian delegations. We discussed several topics, including Christopher's tour, the situation in the occupied territories, the deportees, and implementation of Resolution 799. International legitimacy is indivisible and should not have do[illegible]standards, one against the Palestinians and the Arab nation and another with Israel. If this policy continues, we as an Arab nation should then reconsider our calculations. This will mean that the new world order will be at the expense of this nation and its future as well as the future of our future generations. Among the important issues we discussed with his majesty the king today was the need to remedy the present Arab situation despite all repercussions caused by the Gulf crisis. [passage omitted]

We also discussed the Palestinian intifadah and its continuation as well as reinforcing it against the systematic official Israeli repression, coercion, and terrorism. Today, for example, four were martyred in the West Bank and Gaza. This is the sixth massacre this month, in which more than 330 were wounded and about 35 were martyred. Today a child joined another 14 martyred children. Are these the human rights called for by Clinton? Today I heard him talk about taxes and many other things. He spoke about human rights. Where are the human rights of the Palestinians under the Israeli occupation? I would like to tell the new U.S. Administration and Mr. Christopher: If Rabin has chosen this path of terrorism against our people, then he has only himself to blame. Patience has its limits. This official systematic Israeli terrorism against our people, our children, our women, and our Islamic and Christian holy

places should have a limit and patience has its own limits. Let Rabin then blame none but himself. I say this now so that those near and far will hear it. I say it on the day Christopher arrives in the region to acquaint himself with its events. The meeting with His Majesty King Husayn was, as usual, warm, positive, and effective. It will reflect on the overall Palestinian-Jordanian and inter-Arab relations.

[Question] Within this context, was the issue of presenting certain ideas to the U.S. Secretary on the deportees or peace process in general discussed?

['Arafat] Obviously. We presented ideas which his majesty will discuss with Christopher on our behalf. These deal with the deportees, the official systematic terrorism, the economic embargo and famine against the Gaza Strip in particular, the economic and financial embargo facing the Palestinian people, and dialogue with the PLO in light of Secretary Baker's promise which the previous administration failed to honor. We are not dealing with secretaries but with an administration called the U.S. Administration, be it the old or new one. This is in addition to other important topics His Majesty King Husayn will discuss with Mr. Christopher. [passage omitted]

[Question] Will the Palestinians go to the peace talks if Resolution 799 is not implemented?

['Arafat] It should be made clear that if someone thinks it would be easy for me to go while my brothers the deportees are in Marj al-Zuhur or their problem remains unresolved, he will be mistaken. I would like to tell Christopher: You came carrying a bargain with Rabin. It is a crisis caused by Rabin. You left the Palestinians and Arabs in a crisis. Is this the new world order?

[Question] Before your visit to Jordan you were in Cairo where you met with President Mubarak. Before that you were in Iraq and met with President Saddam Husayn. Are you working on something between Iraq and Egypt?

['Arafat] The truth, as you may recall, is that I made a large contribution to the relaxation of the atmosphere between the brothers in Sudan and Egypt. Following the disruptions and wounds caused by the Gulf war and crisis, I am seeking to restore normal Arab relations. Enough is enough and history will not have mercy on anyone.

[Question] Are you working on something between Presidents Saddam and Mubarak?

['Arafat] I leave it to history to answer this specific question. I prefer to let actions speak for themselves. [passage omitted]

'Arafat: No Talks If Deportees Not Freed

PM2202123893 Paris LE FIGARO in French 19 Feb 93 p 5

[Interview with PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat by Charles Lambroschini in Tunis; date not given]

[Text] [Lambroschini] Warren Christopher is currently in the Middle East to try to set the peace negotiations moving again. On what conditions do you think he can succeed?

['Arafat] The problem has not changed. A solution must be found to the business of the 400 Palestinian deportees that have been waiting in Lebanon for two months. The expulsion decided on by the Israelis conflicts with the Geneva Convention, the Security Council resolutions, and the rules of international law. It is very difficult for us to envisage the resumption of negotiations before this matter has been resolved. It is a war crime.

[Lambroschini] But Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has made it known that the authorization for 101 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members to return is a first stage in the implementation of Resolution 799, which demands that the 400 be allowed to return home. One in four... Do you not think that the Israelis have made a significant gesture?

['Arafat] What gesture? It is a much smaller number than I was offered by a number of foreign mediators, including the Egyptian foreign minister and also by France. Contrary to what you say, the announcement about the 101 is in no way an implementation of Resolution 799.

[Lambroschini] What were you offered? Less than 400 but more than 101?

['Arafat] I cannot give you any details. I am talking about a comprehensive agreement that would enable all the deportees to return.

[Lambroschini] Nevertheless the Security Council seems to have accepted Peres' interpretation by saying that it is a good start. And it did so via its chairman, who is at present an Arab—a Moroccan.

['Arafat] it was not a Security Council decision. There is merely a statement by its chairman, who simply indicated what the Israelis decided. He did not express his own opinion.

[Lambroschini] The Israelis seem prepared to make further gestures. But only after negotiations have resumed, to avoid giving the impression that they paid in advance.

['Arafat] Negotiations will not resume without a solution of the deportees problem. To discover whether there is a solution we will have to wait for Mr. Christopher to reach an agreement with Rabin. It is Rabin who made that fatal mistake of deporting the Palestinians. So it is up to him to find a solution.

[Lambroschini] If, as a further gesture, the Israelis were to decide to release a number of their Palestinian prisoners—this time, not Hamas members, but PLO people—what decision would you reach

['Arafat] There are 40,000 Palestinians in prison. Over 127,000 have been in Israeli concentration camps. The Israeli Government released some of them, but it promptly replaced them. A selective release would not be an adequate gesture.

[Lambroschini] So what are you expecting now from the Security Council?

['Arafat] The Security Council must conduct an official debate to discuss the possibility of sanctions against Israel, because Resolution 799 has still not been implemented. And also the letter from Secretary General Butrus-Ghali who, following the failure of the mission of the two UN special envoys, introduced the idea of protection for the Palestinian people. This protection would have to be guaranteed by the presence of international observers.

[Lambroschini] But the United States is doing its utmost to ensure that the Security Council does not decide on sanctions, which would force Washington to use its right of veto.

['Arafat] According to the letter of guarantees sent by the American Government before the start of the negotiations in Madrid in October 1991 it was understood that there could be no secret arrangement with any of the parties. Any partial agreement would also have to be communicated to the other parties involved. What has happened since the deportations? During the past 3 weeks Khan Yunus in the Gaza strip has been the target of outright state terrorism. For the first time, the Israeli Army has used helicopters to fire missiles and tanks to fire shells. No less than 28 people have died, including 13 children. And all this because Rabin has a guarantee that nothing will happen to him in the Security Council.

[Lambroschini] So does the Clinton administration seem to you less determined than George Bush's to make the peace process succeed?

['Arafat] The Jewish lobby in the United States has obtained more posts in this administration than in the previous one. But despite this fact, we must wait before forming an opinion of Bill Clinton. It is too early to judge.

[Lambroschini] Why do you defend Hamas? This extremist organization is the PLO's rival. By murdering an Israeli soldier 15 December—a murder to which the Israelis responded with the expulsions—Hamas seems to have tried to sabotage the negotiations.

['Arafat] I am not only PLO chairman. I am also the Palestinian chief of state. In this capacity, I am responsible for all Palestinians without exception. But I am keen to remind you of how balanced Palestinian democracy is. Last year we had 33 professional elections in the occupied territories. Hamas won five, the PLO 28.

[Lambroschini] You did not say anything about Hamas' desire to sabotage the negotiations...

['Arafat] Do you not think that, by killing children, Rabin is also guilty of the same sabotage? The 28 deaths in 3 weeks is more than at the time of his predecessor, Yitzhaq Shamir. Furthermore, you know, it is Rabin who legalized Hamas. He permitted it to work openly and to open a university, schools, clinics. When some Knesset deputies pointed out this fact to the Israeli prime minister, he replied: "Yes, it was I who legalized Hamas, but I was trying to create competition with the PLO."

[Lambroschini] Do you really think that Rabin wants to sabotage the peace process? Is he not simply trying to negotiate from a position of strength?

['Arafat] Both. As defense minister under Shamir, it was Rabin that established the "iron fist" policy, in response to the revolt of the intifadah in the occupied territories. The deportations and the killing in Khan Yunus are part of this same strategy. In fact he pursues the same end as Shamir. His aim is to normalize relations between Israel and the Arab states at the Palestine people's expense.

[Lambroschini] Does Iran worry you? Tehran is clearly encouraging Hamas to hamper the PLO.

['Arafat] You know, Iran helps Hamas as it helps all fanatical movements. But it is not just the Iranians. All the Gulf states do the same. They imagine that they will thus succeed in weakening the PLO. As for the Iranians, it is always the same strategy. Remember the war between Iran and Iraq. Look at what they are doing now in Lebanon. And Tehran is also trying to extend its influence in the Gulf. A final example is the occupation of one of the United Arab Emirates' islands—Abu Musa.

[Lambroschini] Was it in order to counterbalance this Iranian influence that you met with Saddam Husayn?

['Arafat] Not at all. My aim was to work to rebuild the unity of the Arab world, which was damaged by the Gulf War. Sooner or later, we will succeed in eliminating the wounds left by that conflict.

[Lambroschini] By being stubborn with Israel, do you not risk missing a unique opportunity? Is the present government not the most left wing in the history of the Jewish state, and therefore the best disposed to a peace agreement?

['Arafat] Rabin and his clique belong to the purest right wing. Rabin works with the left, but his eyes look to the right. Intellectually, as well as temperamentally, he belongs to the right.

[Lambroschini] Apart from the business of the 400 expelees, what is the greatest obstacle to a peace agreement?

['Arafat] The mentality of the Israeli delegation to the peace negotiations. At one of the latest sessions the Israelis suggested to us cutting up the occupied territories like a slice of Swiss cheese—the cheese for them, and the holes for us. They envisaged a red area that Palestinians could not even approach; a green area that we alone could approach; and a gray area where there would be a joint administration. It is impossible to accept such an arrangement. It is worse than the bantustans in South Africa.

'Arafat Receives Message From Kazakh President

LD2302222593 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], president of the State of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, received an important message from the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan today in reply to a recent message. President Akayev [as heard] stressed that the Palestinian people have the unconditional right to self-determination and to the setting up of an independent Palestinian state. The president of Kazakhstan noted that his country affirms that it has no desire to open an embassy in the Zionist entity.

Delegation Head Sets Conditions for Negotiations

PM2202122093 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 17 Feb 93 p 14

[Interview with Faysal al-Husayni, head of the delegation to the peace talks with Israel, by Alberto Stabile on a bus ride to Gaza; date not given]

[Excerpt] Jerusalem—[passage omitted] [Stabile] After almost 50 years and three wars, is peace now the only solution for you and the Israelis?

[Al-Husayni] This has always been so, even in 1948. My father fought to strengthen our positions and then to negotiate. It is the same now; we are trying to negotiate—obviously from the most favorable position.

[Stabile] But you have just said "no" to negotiations by rejecting the compromise over the deportees offered by Israel and accepted by the United States and the Security Council. What, then, will you propose to Secretary of State Christopher to resolve this deadlock?

[Al-Husayni] The principle of deportation conflicts not only with international law, the Geneva Convention, and human rights, but also with the rules of these negotiations. The very principle of the possibility of deportation must be eliminated. Afterward, we can discuss all the other matters.

[Stabile] What specifically will you ask Mr. Christopher?

[Al-Husayni] That he announce full observance of Resolution 799, including the annulment of the deportation order; how the expelees are to return; when; and so forth.

[Stabile] You did not tell me why you reject Israel's proposal?

[Al-Husayni] Because the compromise does not even refer to the aberrant principle of deportation. They say they will allow 101 to return and that 295 others will have their period of expulsion halved. That salvages the principle.

[Stabile] But by so doing you have ultimately bound the future of the peace negotiations to the fate of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members, who have always rejected any possibility of a dialogue with Israel. Do you not consider that inconsistent?.

[Al-Husayni] First, they are part of our people, now and forever. Second, we defend everyone's human rights, irrespective of their political stances. If we were to defend the rights only of those who think the same as us, it would be a tragedy.

[Stabile] Would you return to the negotiating table if Israel were to accept the involvement in the negotiations of Palestinians of the diaspora and those of East Jerusalem?

[Al-Husayni] I would want to hear this first from the Israeli Government, not from the media; then I would give an answer.

[Stabile] Do you not think that it was a tactical mistake on your part to make the issue of the deportees such a priority as to be crucial to the entire negotiations?

[Al-Husayni] These negotiations do not depend on the balance of power—you have so many tanks, I have so many. These negotiations were established on new ideas based on the principle that international law must be observed, forgetting who is stronger and who is weaker. In our case there are rules established by various resolutions, including the rule that rejects the use of means other than negotiation. But if we presume to negotiate but break the rules, we will never achieve anything. This is why things must return as they were before. Because if we were to go to the negotiating table after Resolution 799 has been destroyed, Israel could tell us: These are our proposals; it is up to you to accept them or reject them; but be careful what you do, because in any case we can violate international law and nobody will say anything to us. That would be a diktat, not negotiation.

[Stabile] But it seems that the Arab countries involved in the negotiations are willing to negotiate even if the deportees issue has not been resolved.

[Al-Husayni] Let them attend the meeting by all means; but what can they do under such conditions? They too would risk submitting to a diktat. Israel would tell them: Take it or leave it. And we advise you to take it, because we can hit you, humiliate you, do to you what we did to

the Palestinians. You see, our aim is not just to negotiate but to attend negotiations that will lead somewhere.

[Stabile] If you could issue a message to the Palestinians that use violence against Israeli civilians, what would you say?

[Al-Husayni] That we oppose all violence against any civilian. But I would like to point out that the number of Palestinian civilians killed by the Israelis is 10 times greater.

DFLP Official on U.S. Peace, Residence Rights

NC2102151093 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1230 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] held a speech rally at the Palace cinema in Burj al-Barajinah [in Beirut] today to mark its 24th anniversary. Among the speakers were the Cuban ambassador to Lebanon; Jordanian member of parliament Sayf-al-Din Murad; Hizballah official Abu-Muhammad Hudruj; Khalid 'Abd-al-Majid, secretary general of the 10 Palestinian factions [opposed to the peace talks]; Faysal Barakat, who delivered the address of Lebanese Interior Minister Bisharah Mirhij; Jordanian member of parliament Bassam Hadadi; Ghazi al-'Aridi, political adviser to the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party [PSP]; and DFLP Political Bureau member Salih Zaydan.

Zaydan said: As we begin the sixth glowing year of the intifadah, we utter a loud cry in the face of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, telling him that their peace is the pile of rubble left by the occupation forces' demolition of residential areas in Gaza.

He added: The road to Palestine does not pass through Washington and the intifadah and resistance option will defeat Rabin as it defeated Shamir. It is the path to liberation and return.

Zaydan commented on the conditions of the Palestinians in Lebanon who are deprived of political, civic, and social rights. He asked: Why are Palestinian ranks not strengthened in Lebanon as in Syria? How long will the state continue to neglect the Palestinian camps' infrastructure?

He announced: We have supported the Lebanese Government's honorable stand on the deportees. We confidently believe that resettlement [al-tawtin] requires recognition that the Palestinian people have the right to be affiliated with another entity, the PLO, and to be given their full rights.

Zaydan appealed to the Lebanese Government to begin an official Palestinian-Lebanese dialogue organizing Palestinian-Lebanese relations on a basis that guarantees the Palestinians' political, civic, and social rights. At the same time, he called for organized Palestinian interaction with the Lebanese people to create momentum to attain Palestinian rights in Lebanon.

Zaydan declared that he rejects the United Nations Works and Relief Agency's [UNRWA] new ration and registration cards because they divide the Palestinian people into registered resident Palestinians and registered Palestinians who are abroad, which threatens those abroad with the loss of their residence rights—which are partially linked with the UNRWA card—and consequently, compromises their right to return.

He added: We reject this card because it signifies a further reduction of UNRWA's services and a gradual phasing out of its operations.

He urged continued protest against UNRWA's erroneous policy and improvement of its services. He called for a dialogue between the UNRWA and a delegation representing all Palestinian factions and urged the PLO to express its views on this issue instead of remaining silent.

PSP official al-'Aridi called for unity between the intifadah inside the occupied homeland and the national and Islamic Resistance in Lebanon. He urged adherence to the demand to implement Security Council Resolution 799. He said he appreciates Syrian support and he criticized U.S. support for Israel on the deportees issue and the Security Council's compliance with the U.S.-Israeli deal. He said he rejects current efforts to partially implement the resolution.

In conclusion, al-'Aridi called for recognizing the Palestinian people's civic and social rights in Lebanon.

Egypt

Musa on UN Move To Try Serbian War Criminals

NC2302151893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1400 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa described the Security Council resolution to establish a tribunal to try the war criminals in former Yugoslavia as an important step in the fight against the destructive and racist ideologies that have appeared in the Serbian arena against Bosnia.

Musa called for the tribunals' establishment to be expedited and said that Egypt was the first country to ask France and the other permanent members of the Security Council to discuss it. He said Egypt expressed its readiness to submit the issue to the Security Council and supported it completely when the permanent members confirmed that they would discuss it. He said he hoped the details of the issue would be concluded quickly so that the defendants will be tried.

U.S. Promise of More Active Role Viewed

NC2402083793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0706 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 24 Feb (MENA)—AL-AHRAM has said it is astonished at U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's promise that his country will play a more active and effective role in the Middle East peace talks, without playing such a role in the issue of the deportees, despite the fact that circumstances are appropriate for mediation of any kind.

In its editorial today, the newspaper described the U.S. ideas, which the United States will soon propose to both sides to bring their viewpoints closer, as an attractive offer that does no more than return things to where they were before they were diluted, especially since the United States is a full partner in the talks and not just a mediator.

The newspaper said it seems mediation is as far as the United States will go in presenting ideas in its capacity as a factor helping to bring the two sides together. This is precisely what the former George Bush administration did.

Musa, Russian Official Discuss Peace Process

NC2102143893 Cairo MENA in English 1310 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, Feb 21 (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today met with director of Africa and Middle East Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry Viktor Posuvalyuk, currently visiting here.

The Russian official told reporters after the meeting that he handed over a message to Musa from Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev pertaining to conditions in the Middle East and Russia's role in contributing to accelerating the peace process. They reviewed Russia's view on the latest developments in the region.

He added that Musa gave him a message to Kozyrev on Egypt's views on the latest Mideast conditions.

Posuvalyuk underlined Russia's support for implementing the Security Council resolutions.

Russia considers Israel's decision to allow 100 Palestinian deportees to return home as a step in the right track. It should be followed by other steps in order to have them return home according to Security Council Resolution 799 in this respect, he added.

The Russian Federation is making contacts with the parties concerned to reach a solution to the deportees issue and to push forward the peace process.

Sudan's Rulers Said Living in 'Another World'

NC2302095793 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 20 Feb 93 p 14

[The "Dividing Lines" column by Samir Rajab]

[Excerpts] Because of their policy of coercion, repression, and terrorism, the rulers of Sudan, led by Hasan al-Turabi, looked around them and found only desolation and ruin. The economic crisis is grave, the streets are full of naked and hungry people, and sickness kills children in their thousands. The doors of hope are closed. The people are in one world and the government in another. The state suffers total isolation after the developed world failed over four years to establish normal relations with Sudan based on frankness and awareness of the people's issues and respect for the simplest human rights.

So many countries wanted to lift the people of Sudan from the abyss, but their rulers established barriers around them to devote themselves to liquidating them one by one to prove to their "chief" in Tehran and their teacher in killing and bloodshed in Baghdad that they are following their way. [passage omitted]

The strange thing is that instead of devoting their time to studying their deteriorating conditions and thinking of ways to save their people, the rulers of Sudan look at Egypt, its people and president, playing a broken record. Reality has proven the shallow mentality of those who promoted this record.

Their radio yesterday launched an attack against us on the pretext that we made the Arabs lose their identity because Cairo adhered to the peace policy and beat the drums of war against Iraq and that all this could not have happened before the Arabs were hit by the stable of David (in their naive minds they mean the Camp David Agreement).

So Sudan's rulers have indeed proven that they live in another world. They also proved that they are champions of terrorism and sabotage. Who in the world today is against peace? [passage omitted]

Clearly, Sudan's rulers, through the walls of isolation they built around themselves, do not follow what is going on in the world. If they did they would have understood that the Arabs, without exception, believe that Egypt's policy on the Palestinian issue is the best policy. They would also have seen how much they regret lagging behind on this civilized idea.

As for the story of beating the drums of war against Iraq, al-Bashir, al-Turabi, and their band insist on holding onto the frayed ropes of Saddam Husayn, who promised them wealth. And here they are (Saddam and his band) paying the price of stabbing a brother and attacking a neighbor and friend.

Our talk about the rulers of Sudan will not stop until they learn to be polite when they address Egypt, its people and president. They must consider that there are rules in speech. If they do not respect them, we are called upon by virtue of "our historic responsibility" to put them on the right road, at least so that we will not be "blamed."

Engineers Association Puts Off Election

NC2402064793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2304 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 23 Feb (MENA)—The Engineers Association has decided to postpone the second-round council elections scheduled for 26 February and 5 March until a later date to be decided by the council. The council said that the Engineers Association adheres to the law.

The decision was made during a meeting between Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi; Engineer 'Isam Radi, minister of works and water resources and the minister in charge of the Engineers Association; Dr. Ahmad Salamah, minister for the People's Assembly and Consultative Council Affairs; and Counselor Ahmad Radwan, minister of state for Cabinet Affairs.

During the meeting, the Engineers Association explained its views on the enforcement of Law 100 for 1993 pertaining to the election of professional association councils. They also discussed the application of Law 100 to the Engineers Association runoff elections.

Former Somali President's Asylum Request Rejected

NC2402111293 Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 22 Feb 93 p 1

[Text] AL-AHRAR has learned that Egypt has refused to grant political asylum to former Somali President Siad Barre. The Somali president's request to live permanently in Cairo has also been rejected. It should be recalled that Siad Barre was denied political asylum in Nigeria.

Egypt has told Barre's envoy that Cairo has refused to receive him at the present time due to various political considerations. Granting Barre political asylum would infuriate the Somali factions and, consequently, would freeze their contacts with Cairo. It would also obstruct the efforts being made by Cairo and the Arab League to hold a reconciliation conference next month.

Kurdish Leaders Said To Visit Cairo 'Soon'

NC2402112093 Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 22 Feb 93 p 1

[Text] Diplomatic sources have stated that Jalal Talabani [leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] and Mas'ud Barzani [leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party] will visit Cairo soon.

Dissidents Dismiss Labor Party Leader

NC2002120993 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1021 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 20 Feb (AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY)—During its meeting yesterday chaired by Ahmad Mujahid [a dissident party leader], the Seventh Socialist Labor Party Congress announced adherence to the party's political program and rejected [party leader] Ibrahim Shukri's deviation, which turned the party into a religious party in violation of the Constitution and the Political Parties Law. The congress decided to stick to the decisions of the party's sixth congress of 23 March 1990, which dismissed Engineer Ibrahim Shukri, [AL-SHA'B Chief Editor] 'Adil Husayn, 'Abd-al-Hamid Barakat, Naji al-Hawi, and Majdi Ahmad Husayn. It decided to elect a provisional party leadership for one year.

The congress decided to take all legal measures ensured by the law, including a request for the public prosecutor to investigate the funding of the party over the past period. The congress also decided to publish AL-SHA'B in the name of the Socialist Labor Party as of 1 March and to hold voting among the party bureau members to name the paper's chief editor.

Atomic Agency To Set Up Early Warning Detectors

NC2002162493 Cairo MENA in English 1338 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Tunis, 20 Feb (MENA)—Chairman of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency Dr. Mahmud Barakat underlined that the agency intends to set up a nuclear radiation early warning-detecting network in the Arab area to protect it against any nuclear incidents.

In an interview with MENA correspondent here, Dr. Barakat said that the project is implemented in phases through linking the radiation detecting networks, set up by some Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. The Arab Maghreb countries started contacts with

the Arab Atomic Energy Agents to prepare for the establishment of their radiation-detecting network, he added.

Dr. Barakat said that the agency plans to set up a Tunis-based specialised nuclear research centre that aims at training and preparing specialised scientists in atomic field. The establishment of the centre also aims at exchanging expertise between Arab scientists, in order to achieve coordination between the Arab countries in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic and nuclear energy he added.

The Arab Atomic Energy Agency studies a number of projects, to be implemented in some Arab countries such as setting up a number of nuclear stations and reactors, to be used in the fields of water-desalination, power-generation, agriculture and subterranean waters, he added.

All the projects supervised by the agency comes within the framework of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, he said.

Officials Comment on Government Control of Mosques

NC2002151593 Paris AFP in English 1352 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Asyut, Egypt, Feb 20 (AFP)—All mosques in Upper Egypt, hotbeds of Muslim fundamentalism, will come under government control in the next three years, a senior official of the religious affairs and endowments ministry said Saturday [20 February].

Shaykh Ahmad Hindi, under secretary of state in charge of the Asyut, al-Minya and al-Sawhag provinces, said 2,115 of the 4,950 existing mosques were currently controlled by the ministry. Of those, 2,000 are in Asyut.

The remainder are administered by private individuals or fundamentalist groups, he said.

"It will be an expensive operation since each mosque turned over to the government will cost 10,000 Egyptian pounds (about 3,000 dollars) a year," Hindi said.

Western tourists have come under repeated attack in Egypt in recent months and a British holidaymaker was killed in October in the south of the country, which has been wracked by Muslim fundamentalist violence.

Another ministry official in Asyut, 350 kilometers (217 miles) south of Cairo who declined to be identified, said: "At least eight mosques in the region are in the hands of the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, the main underground fundamentalist organization in the country, including the al-Rahmah mosque in Asyut."

He said the fundamentalists held weekly meetings on Tuesdays in front of the noses of the police, in the Shaykh Mansur mosque in Abu Tij, 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of Asyut and insulted Egyptian leaders, notably President Husni Mubarak.

He said state-appointed clerics were harassed in Upper Egypt mosques and complaints of Islamic assaults against them by fundamentalists in recent years in the Asyut region had been made to the courts.

But no charges had been brought and the police, fearing clashes with the extremists, had not intervened to prevent the assaults, the official said.

"Security services were content to arrest a few of them for a few days before releasing them," he complained.

The official also said the police would do better to leave some mosques in Upper Egypt under fundamentalist control, the better to avoid violence and to keep tabs on extremist activities.

An interior ministry official said he, too, supported the idea since the police did not want to bar al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah members from praying in whichever mosque they chose, "but want to prevent them from using the mosques for organizing illegal activities."

Egypt currently has 170,000 mosques, including 30,000 administered by the religious affairs and endowments ministry.

In December, Religious Affairs Minister Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub said the government was planning to gradually take over 140,000 private mosques in a bid to counter Islamic fundamentalism.

Emergency Law To Be Applied to Profiteers

NC2002183193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1708 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 20 Feb (MENA)—Interior Minister Muhammad 'Abd-al-Halim Musa has announced that the Emergency Law will be applied to anyone who tries to profiteer by manipulating the staple foods market, exploit the blessed month of Ramadan to cause artificial shortages of commodities, cheat in quality, or raise prices. [passage omitted]

Death Sentence Handed Down for Policeman's Murder

NC2302123893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1212 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Alexandria, 23 Feb (MENA)—The Supreme Military Court in Alexandria in its public session today sentenced to death the defendant Hasan Shihatah Hasan Badran for killing martyr [police] Captain 'Ali Khatir, attempting to kill Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud al-Makhzanji, possession of weapons and ammunition, and resisting the authorities.

The court convened its session at 1100 today under Colonel Faysal Haybah. Attending the session were also Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Qatatu and Lieutenant

Colonel Ahmad Shukri. Chief Military Prosecutor Colonel al-Sayyid Hammudah attended the session.

Two Arrested for Killing Suspected Police Informer

NC2302163293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1550 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Asyut, 23 Feb (MENA)—Security forces in Asyut, Upper Egypt, today arrested two members of the extremist al-Jihad Organization who opened fire on and killed 35-year-old farmer 'Sayyid 'Abd-al-Hafiz Khalil in Bani Qurrah village, al-Qusiyah District, for his constant hostility toward the extremist groups and their belief that he collaborated with police.

Brigadier General Ahmad Sha'ban, al-Qusiyah district chief of police, received a report that Khalil had been killed. Preliminary investigations carried out by the criminal investigations groups in Asyut indicated that the culprits were 35-year-old farmer Sulayman 'Abd-al-Jawad 'Abd-al-Hafiz, 35, and 18-year-old student Mahmud Salah Sami. Investigations showed that they belong to the al-Jihad Organization.

Security forces arrested the culprits and referred them to the prosecution, which ordered their detention for four days to continue the investigations.

Police Arrest 36 al-Jihad Members in Asyut

NC2302113293 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1052 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 23 Feb (AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY)—Security authorities in Asyut have arrested 36 al-Jihad Organization members for possessing leaflets and weapons. The defendants have been transferred to the State Security Department [in Cairo]. Meanwhile, a prosecutor in Asyut today ordered the imprisonment of three extremists: Ahmad Ibrahim Qinnawi, 'Abd-al-Muhsin Salih, and 'Imad-al-Din Shawqi.

Eighteen 'Extremists' Arrested in Asyut

NC2402143993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1350 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Asyut, 24 Feb (MENA)—Eighteen extremists were arrested in a security clampdown in Asyut, in Qism Thani, west of the city. Four of the detainess are wanted in connection with previous incidents, including attacks on Christians, attempts to incite religious sedition, and breaches of public security.

Two unlicensed revolvers and some live ammunition were seized in the clampdown, which was designed to crush terrorist activity in the region and apprehend terrorists before they can carry out criminal acts.

Libya

Foreign Embassies To Be Moved to Isolated Area

NC2302153393 Paris AFP in English 1509 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Nicosia, Feb 23 (AFP)—The Libyan government plans to move foreign embassies to a semi-desert region hundreds of miles from the capital in a move that will hamper embassy work, a Western ambassador there said Tuesday [23 February].

The authorities have sent questionnaires to the embassies asking them to list the arrangements they would need in Ra's Lanuf, 650 kilometers (400 miles) southeast of the capital, Tripoli, the ambassador told AFP by telephone. But a date has not been set and the move did not appear imminent, according to the ambassador who requested anonymity. "The move means diplomats would be isolated in an arid region," he said. They would be cut off from their nationals, as well as government ministries and companies, while local embassy employees and people seeking visas would have trouble reaching the embassies, he added.

Although the Libyan foreign and oil ministries would also move to Ra's Lanuf, many other ministries have in the past been moved to Surt, Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's home town, as part of decentralization efforts begun in 1988. The embassies may send Libyan authorities a note outlining the difficulties they would face.

Ra's Lanuf, where an oil terminal and refinery are situated, is located on the most arid strip of land near the Libyan coast.

Under UN sanctions imposed last April on Tripoli for its refusal to extradite suspects in the 1988 bombing of a U.S. airliner, the international community has been asked to reduce its diplomatic staff in Libya.

Mauritania

Russian Official Arrives in Nouakchott 19 Feb

LD1902215493 Nouakchott ORTM Radio in Arabic 2030 GMT 19 Feb 93

[Text] An important delegation representing the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, headed by Yuriy Voronin, deputy speaker of the Russian parliament, arrived in the capital, Nouakchott, this evening. The delegation was greeted at the airport by a parliamentary delegation headed by (Sid Ahmed Oullada), deputy speaker of the National Assembly.

At the airport, the deputy speaker of the Russian Parliament made a statement to our colleague Mohamed Mokhtar Ould Mohamed in which he thanked the Mauritanian Senate and National Assembly for giving them this opportunity to visit our country. He also expressed his most sincere congratulations to the Mauritanian

people who have made important achievements in the past few years. Regarding the aim of the visit, the Russian official said that his delegation will endeavor to strengthen its relations with the Mauritanian Parliament to ensure the continuation of the cooperation which existed between the USSR and our country.

Meets With Prime Minister

LD2002234093 Nouakchott ORTM Radio in Arabic 2030 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Excerpt] His Excellency Prime Minister Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker received this afternoon the Russian parliamentary delegation headed by Yuriy Mikhailovich Voronin, the deputy speaker of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. [passage omitted]

Delegation Concludes Visit

LD2102222093 Nouakchott ORTM Radio in Arabic 2030 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Excerpts] The Russian parliament delegation led by Mr. Yuriy Mikhailovich Voronin, deputy speaker of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, left the capital this evening at the end of a working visit to our country. [passage omitted]

The president of the Republic, Mr. Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, received the delegation in the presidential palace this morning.

In a statement to the national press after the meeting, the leader of the Russian delegation said that he informed the president on the results of his current visit to Mauritania. He added that they reviewed various means for developing the relations between the two countries, especially between the two parliaments and two governments, and also the cooperation between businessmen.

Voronin said that the talks concentrated in particular on developing bilateral relations in fishing, tourism, and health. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Filali on Sahara Issue, Arab Maghreb Union

LD1902134893 Rabat MAP in English 1226 GMT 19 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb 19 (MAP)—Moroccan Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Minister Abdellatif Filali imputed the stalemate of the Sahara problem to the intransigence of the enemies of Morocco's territorial integrity.

Filali who was guest Wednesday to the '2M' Moroccan private TV channel program 'The Man in the Focus' said the holding of the referendum is the only solution to the problem asserting that the consultation shall confirm the Sahara as Moroccan. He added that contacts are underway in the Security Council to reach a consensus on the holding of the self-determination referendum before next October.

On Moroccan-Algerian relations, Filali said dialogue and compromise are the sole options to settle bilateral disputes.

To a question on the slow progress made by the Arab Maghreb Union "AMU", Filali said AMU foreign ministers convened during their recent meeting in Tunis to take a "break" to lay new and firm foundations for the union.

Underlining the significant achievements completed by AMU at the human and institutional scales since inception in 1989, Filali said one must not forget that the five AMU members had during the past thirty years diverging economic and political systems and that these divergences cannot be mopped up in few months nor in few years.

Filali also dealt with Morocco-EC relations stressing the need for the EC to change its policy vis-a-vis the Kingdom in view of the special ties and relations existing between the two sides. He expressed appreciation for the EC proposal to sign a partnership accord with Morocco and set up a free-exchange zone and urged the EC to cooperate with the Kingdom in fighting drug trafficking and in promoting the Moroccan northern areas where cannabis is illegally grown.

Concerning the Palestinians deportation issue, Filali said for Morocco Israel must necessarily abide by Resolution 799. As to the statement made by the Moroccan permanent representative to the UN and acting chairman of the Security Council, Filali said the representative spoke on behalf of the council and did not voice Morocco's stand.

Algerian Foreign Minister Visits To Begin Talks

LD2402104893 Algiers APS in English 1011 GMt 24 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, 24/02/93 (APS)—Redha Malek, member of the Higher State Committee (HCE) and Algerian foreign affairs minister paid, as an emissary of the HCE, a 24-hour-visit to Morocco to relaunch the dialogue between the two countries, at the highest level.

Redha Malek declared on Monday [22 February], at his arrival in Rabat that his visit comes in Morocco meets a decision of the Higher State Committee following conversations he recently had in Tunis with the Moroccan foreign affairs minister, Abdellatif Filali.

My presence in Morocco is natural because, he said, Algeria estimated that one is to give a new departure to dialogue between the two countries.

During his visit, Redha Malek, HCE member and foreign affairs minister had talks with King Hassan II and

dealt with the Moroccan foreign affairs minister bilateral and inter-Maghrebin relations as well as the present situation in Arab world.

"Deep talks I had with King Hassan II were centered on the multiple questions of common interest, both concerning bilateral relations and the region", Redha Malek declared to the press.

Bilateral problems which were referred to during this meeting were the subject, he stressed, of an exchange of views on the evaluation of every country on the political and economic plans.

Discussions we had on these problems were constructive and were marked by the will shared by the two countries to rehabilitate the climate between them.

All these questions, he stressed, enabled to put a stress on Algeria and Morocco's will to relaunch the dialogue between them.

Qualifying the meeting he had with King Hassan II as "important and "useful", Redha Malek declared yesterday shortly before leaving the Moroccan capital that the dialogue will be carried on between the two countries, at all the levels in order to rehabilitate the climate and progressively develop between them relations oriented towards the future.

The two countries, he stressed, are convinced of the necessity to relaunch dialogue and advance in this way, in an objective and rational way.

Filali Greets Malek

LD2202151293 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] Redha Malek, Higher State Council member and Algerian foreign minister, arrived this morning in Rabat on a working visit to Morocco. He was received at Rabat-Sale airport by minister of state in charge of foreign affairs and cooperation Abdellatif Filali.

Malek told journalists at the airport that this visit is primarily a follow-up to the discussions he held in Tunis with Abdellatif Filali, and is also a resumption of dialogue at the highest level.

Late this morning the Algerian foreign minister held talks in Rabat with Abdellatif Filali, minister of state in charge of foreign affairs and cooperation. These talks dwelled on bilateral and Maghreb relations, and on the current Arab and international situation. These discussions were attended by Algeria's ambassador in Rabat and the minister's close aides.

Meets King Hassan II

LD2302104893 Algiers APS in English 1013 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, 23/02/93 (APS)—Redha Malek, Algerian foreign affairs minister and emissary of the Higher State Committee (HCE) was audienced on Monday here by King Hassan II.

In a statement to the APS, Redha Malek stressed that deep talks he had with Hassan II were centered on multiple questions of common interests both as concerns bilateral relations and the region.

He also indicated that bilateral problems which were dealt with during these talks were the subject of an exchange of points of views on the evolution of every country, on the economic and political plans.

On another turn, Redha Malek had also talks with the Moroccan state minister of foreign affairs and cooperation, Abdellatif Filali.

Talks between the two sides, an official source indicated, were mainly centered on bilateral and inter-maghrebin relations and on the present situation in the Arab world.

It is worth recalling that Redha Malek, member of the Higher State Committee (HCE) and foreign affairs minister arrived on Monday in Rabat for a working visit to Morocco.

My visit to Morocco follows a decision of the HCE, Redha Malek indicated upon his arrival to the press.

As an answer to a question as to the accord relating to the marking of borders between Algeria and Tunisia, Redha Malek indicated that this accord is the positive and definitive result of negotiations led by the two countries.

Henceforth, he said, the Algero-Tunisian borders are definitely delimited from the Mediterranean Sea to Bir Romane and the marking operation will start shortly to end before the end of this year.

We estimated, he added, that the accord which was concluded between Tunisia and Algeria and which opens new prospects to our common solidarity, is an important accord, a historical accord.

Malek Leaves Rabat

LD2302150193 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Mr Redha Malek, member of the Higher State Council and foreign minister in Algeria, left Rabat this morning at the end of a working visit to Morocco which was characterized by his reception by His Majesty King Hassan II.

The Algerian official stated before his departure that his talks with Moroccan officials, in particular with his majesty the king, were beneficial. Issues of common interest were dealt with during the talks. He affirmed

that the dialogue will continue between the two countries for the sake of clearing up the atmosphere and gradually move forward to develop bilateral relations. [passage omitted]

The Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ministry pointed out that the talks dealt with bilateral relations and regional issues of common interest, and that they were conducted in an atmosphere full of fraternal spirit. The two sides agreed to continue the dialogue between them on all the issues of common interest, and also agreed on continuing to investigate all the means and avenues capable of strengthening bilateral relations and consolidating the march of the Arab Maghreb Union.

Press Views Visit

LD2302142593 Rabat MAP in English 1315 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb. 23 (MAP)—The Moroccan media devotes this Tuesday its editorials to the visit to Morocco by Algerian Foreign Minister and member of the Higher State Committee Redha Malek.

For 'BAYANE AL YOUM', daily in Arabic of the Party for Progress and Socialism, the visit is very timely in view of the recent cooling of Algerian-Moroccan relations which might compromise the Arab Maghreb Union edification process. The state visit of Redha Malek testifies to the two countries' firm will to improve bilateral ties as bad relations between the two Maghreban countries will only serve the interests of those who do not appreciate that the five Maghreban countries build a common future on the bases of democracy, stability and peace.

For its part, L'OPINION of the Istiqlal Party notes the timeliness of the Algerian official's mission to Morocco as bilateral relations are reduced to the minimum. Consolidated ties between the five Maghreban countries will help them progress and take up the challenges they are facing, the daily writes.

"Morocco and Algeria should lay emphasis on points of agreement and establish a climate of mutual trust, understanding and solidarity", went on 'L'OPINION'.

For ALMAGHRIB of the National Rally of Independents, economic cooperation does not prevent the two countries from having different approaches on a number of issues. This difference in viewpoints should not however be a tension factor.

Lambrani, Russian Ministers Discuss Relations

LD1902133293 Rabat MAP in English 1240 GMT 19 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb 19 (MAP)—Ways to promote Moroccan-Russian relations topped talks here Thursday between Moroccan Premier Mohamed Karim Lambrani and a visiting Russian MP delegation headed by Vice-Speaker of the Supreme Soviet Yuriy Voronin.

Voronin asked Lambrani to convey to King Hassan II a special message from the speaker of the Supreme Soviet and express to the sovereign and the Moroccan people the Russian MPs gratitude for the humanitarian assistance extended from Morocco to Russia.

For his part, Lambrani hailed the cooperation ties between the two countries and Russia's participation in several Moroccan projects such as the "M'jara" dam in the Fes region.

Russia is also contributing to a number of fisheries and industrial projects.

Official Expresses Satisfaction

LD2002150993 Rabat MAP in English 1318 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb 20 (MAP)—A Russian MP [parliament member] delegation led by deputy speaker of the Supreme Soviet council Yuriy Voronin left Friday Morocco after a two day work visit during which they met Premier Mohamed Karim Lambrani and leaders of major political parties.

In a departure statement, the Russian official expressed satisfaction at his talks with Moroccan officials and affirmed that the visit was an opportunity to review issues of common interests and consolidate further the Moroccan-Russian cooperation in all fields.

Preparations for the Arab-Russian meeting due next May in Moscow were also raised during the visit, Yuriy Voronin said.

Russia contributed in several Moroccan development, industrial and water projects.

Premier Meets With Spanish, Algerian Ministers

LD1702141093 Rabat MAP in English 1248 GMT 17 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb 17 (MAP)—Premier Karim Lambrani met here Tuesday [16 February] Algerian Energy Minister Hacene Mefti, Spanish Industry, Trade and Tourism Minister Claudio Aranzadi, and Driss Alaoui M'daghri, [Moroccan] minister of energy and mining, who reported on progress in the Maghreb-Europe gas-pipeline project.

Ministers voiced satisfaction at the pace of work and renewed their governments' readiness to go ahead with the undertaking which ushers in a new era of cooperation in the area.

Lambrani thanked participants for earnest action and said that beyond economic reasons, the projects has come to stand for a symbol of close cooperation between the Maghreb and Europe and friendship between the three countries.

The ministers met earlier in Rabat to assess results obtained so far. They agreed work was proceeding normally according to plans which slate operation for October 1995. They covered energetic, economic, financial and political aspects before meeting the press to stress the importance of the regional project meant to take Algerian gas to Europe via Morocco and highlight work completed so far.

Follow-up meetings like the one hosted Tuesday by the Moroccan capital already convened in Madrid (Apr—1991), Brussels (may—1991), Rabat (dec—1991), and Hassi Rmel in Algeria (June—1992).

Assistant Secretary General of Government Appointed

LD2302141293 Rabat MAP in English 1234 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb. 23 (MAP)—Abdessadek Rabii [name as received] director of legislation studies at the Government Secretariat General was appointed Monday assistant secretary general of the government.

Addressing him, King Hassan II said the decision to appoint an assistant secretary general was made in view of the illness of Abbas el-Kaissi, secretary general of the government to whom the sovereign wished a swift recovery.

The sovereign praised the qualities of Rabii and wished him full success in his new job.

Moroccan-Spanish Committee on Straits Link Meets

LD2302120693 Rabat MAP in Arabic 1022 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Rabat, 23 Feb MAP—The Moroccan-Spanish joint committee in charge of studying the continental link though the straits of Gibraltar concluded its 26th session in Rabat under the chairmanship of Mohamed Kabbaj, minister of public works, vocational and cadre training, and Jose Borrell Fontelles, Spanish minister of public works and transportation, by signing the minutes.

During this meeting, the committee ratified the specific work program which was presented by the national company for the straits studies and the Spanish company for the continental link though the straits in implementation of the decision made by the committee in its recent meeting.

In the minutes of its meeting, the committee called on the two companies to work on completing the work program according to the specified times, emphasizing that it will prepare a brief report on the basis of the result of the studies to be presented to the governments of the two countries. [passage omitted]

The joint committee called on the Spanish and Moroccan companies to continue to offer their support to the two regional committees, and participate in the proceedings of the forthcoming session of the social and economic council which is scheduled to convene in Geneva in June 1993. [passage omitted]

Council for Human Rights Outlines 1993 Program

LD1902135293 Rabat MAP in English 1231 GMT 19 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb. 19 (MAP)—The 1993 action program of the Moroccan Consultative Council for Human Rights and that of its various working groups is contained in a memorandum presented to King Hassan II at the end of the sixth session of the council.

The memorandum says the working groups are to convene every other month to consider issues such as penal procedure, penitentiary conditions and the continuation of dialogue with official institutions and non-governmental organizations on human rights in the camps of Tindouf in a bid to inform them on the reality, the inhuman practices and human rights violations in the camps. They will also hold meetings with the national and international press.

The council will according to the memorandum organize visits to regional and international organizations to discuss human rights questions and will carry on dialogue with Moroccan human rights organizations and deal with the different reports on the matter to check their contents.

The council also made a proposal on holding a working session with Amnesty International to clear up the situation and carry on dialogue on human rights.

The council recalled that it had suspended any contact with Amnesty International on the ground that the latter does not know the Moroccan reality and carries on its hostile campaign against Morocco and continues spreading false rumors while keeping silent on the misdeeds of the enemies of the Moroccan territorial integrity and that it decided to resume contacts at the insisting demand of Amnesty International.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Concludes Visit, Departs

LD1602144093 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Excerpt] Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Kuwait, left Rabat this morning at the end of a visit to Morocco during which he delivered a message to His Majesty King Hassan II, may God give him victory, from the amir of the State of Kuwait, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah. [passage omitted]

Sudan

SPLA's Garang Arrives in Kampala for Talks

EA1902201993 Kampala Radio Uganda Network in English 1900 GMT 19 Feb 93

[Text] The leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army [SPLA], Colonel John Garang, has arrived in Kampala for talks with the Sudanese Government to end the civil war in their country. This is in accordance with the understanding reached this week during President Museveni's visit to Sudan aimed at bringing the two sides together.

Garang Ready for Abuja

EA2302131093 Khartoum SUNA in English 0930 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Khartoum, 23 Feb (SUNA)—John Garang, leader of one of the outlaws movement's factions has affirmed his commitment to attend the coming round of talks in Abuja, Nigeria. In a meeting Monday [23 February], which [Economic Planning and Investment Minister] Dr. 'Ali al-Haj Muhammad chaired the Sudan Government side, Garang affirmed his faction's commitment to the agreements reached during the first Abuja talks and what will be reached during the coming talks.

The meeting, which was also attended by the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, has discussed the political system, and the viewpoints regarding the congress system as the competent system for ruling the Sudan were close.

Garang said the viewpoints may draw more close through dialogue.

Factions Issue Statement

EA2302203893 Khartoum SUNA in English 1650 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Kampala, 23rd Feb (SUNA)—The talks held here between the Sudanese Government and the outlaws movement, Garang [as received], Garang faction, wound up sessions Tuesday [23 February] and the two sides issued a joint statement.

The Sudanese Government side was chaired by Dr. 'Ali al-Hajj Muhammad, the minister of investment and planning, while Garang's faction delegation was led by Garang himself.

The statement said that the two sides agreed to go to Abuja [Nigeria] for the next round of peace talks without any preconditions. The two sides also agreed to hold primary talks in Abuja before the next round of peace talks.

The two sides reached an agreement that the next round of peace talks will be conducted between the Sudanese Government and the main faction of the outlaws movement.

The joint statement was signed in Entebbe on Tuesday [23 February] by the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Dr. 'Ali al- Hajj Muhammad, the chairman of the government's delegation, and John Garang, the leader of the outlaws movement.

Chairman of Peace Committee on Rebels, Peace

EA2302202093 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1315 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Mr. Ahmad al-Radi Jabir, the chairman of the Transitional National Assembly's [TNA] Peace Committee, has stressed that a number of the rebel movement's leaders have voiced approval of the government's peace efforts, noting that they have expressed the need for the achievement of stability and an end to the war. He said that there would be a meeting between those leaders and the authorities of the southern states to bring about a general consensus to support the peace efforts.

Mr. Ahmad al-Radi Jabir said after returning from Upper Nile State that he had familiarized himself with the efforts being made in this context, adding that consultations had been embarked on with the citizens in all the towns controlled by the government with a view to briefing them on the peace efforts. His excellency noted that the consultations which had been engaged in this respect had been positive and effective and had met with a broad response. The chairman of the TNA's Peace Committee praised Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni for supporting the peace process in Sudan.

Commentary Assesses Current Round of Peace Talks

EA2302204593 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 23 Feb 93

["Political Commentary"]

[Text] It has now become certain that the second round of peace talks will soon be held in Abuja. Reports indicate that a high-level delegation will be leaving the country with a letter from the Sudanese Government on the preparations for the next round of negotiations. In this context, talks are currently in progress in Kampala between a government delegation led by Dr. 'Ali al-Hajj Muhammad and a delegation of the rebel movement representing John Garang's faction. It is known that of the rebel factions, John Garang's was the only one with which the government has been unable to hold talks due to the obstinacy that faction has displayed on every occasion that it was called on to join in talks.

It is worth recalling that the first round of the Abuja talks set aside the issue of secession, because the rebel movement had no right to call for secession, nor was it within the rights of the government or its delegation to discuss such a matter, and that whatever was achieved in terms of agreement at Abuja was violated by John Garang, who said the agreement did not accord with his brief. In this respect observers note that William Nyuan [Bany Deng].

who signed the Abuja agreement on behalf of Garang's faction, used the issue as an opportunity to escape from the dungeon of the rebellion. Proof of this lies in the fact that John Garang was not made aware of the results of the round of talks until the moment that battle was joined near Kajo Kaji.

The observers add that it was unlikely that the talks would succeed because it was inconceivable that John Garang could agree to the results of the first round, not because of his being against the government, but because of being unwilling to sit at the same table with his friends of yesterday who are now in other factions.

It was that more than anything else that kept John Garang away and prompted him to adopt even more absurd proposals, such as the amalgamation of Ingessema and the Nubah mountain area into the south. What also increased John Garang's isolation was that numbers of southern intellectuals were opposed to the government's paying John Garang so much attention, seeing this as a diminution of the movement recently organized in the country [as received]. Moreover, some of them prefer that the rebel factions should come together and pick a leader to represent them at Abuja. But it seems that this is an impossible ambition. Meanwhile, the government, conscious of its duty, has contacted all the factions, including that of John Garang.

Justice Minister Admits Human Rights 'Excesses'

PM2402113293 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 Feb 93 pp 1, 4

[Report by Mu'awiyah Yasin: "Sudanese Minister Admits Human Rights Excesses"]

[Excerpt] London—Sudanese Justice Minister and Attorney General 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu has admitted the occurrence of human right "excesses" in his country. He pointed out, however, that these excesses do not represent the government's policy.

While oppositionists said yesterday that an army officer loyal to the National Islamic Front had been arrested, the Sudanese justice minister revealed that a security officer had been sentenced to death on charges of violating his detainees' rights.

The minister, who was speaking to AL-HAYAH over the telephone from Geneva, where he is participating in the meetings of the 49th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, pointed out that the security man sentenced to death had killed a truck driver following an argument which occurred between them when the former stopped the latter at a checkpoint outside the town of Sannar in central Sudan.

The minister said that the death sentence is awaiting the approval of the supreme court in Khartoum. However, he did not specify when the crime took place or when the trial was held. He added that another 11 security officials had been tried on charges of torturing detainees.

The Sudanese minister said that "denial will be of no benefit. Excesses certainly took place and we cannot deny them. But they do not represent the government's policy. They occurred in circumstances which should be assessed humanely: There is a civil war in the south, armed robbery in the west, and mass emigration in the center of the country." [passage omitted]

Sudanese oppositionists told AL-HAYAH in London and Cairo that Sudanese authorities have formed a court-martial in the town of Khashm al-Qirbah (east Sudan), which is currently examining accusations leveled at nine officers and 12 noncommissioned officers. They did not specify the nature of the accusations.

They said that last Sunday the authorities arrested 10 people, among them Major General Muhammad al-Sanusi, who was a senior security official in the early months of Al-Bashir's coup. They added that the detainee is one of the officers loyal to the National Islamic Front, which supports the regime. A lawyer known for his loyalty to the Islamists was also arrested with the group.

The oppositionists who spoke to AL-HAYAH came to the conclusion that Al-Sanusi's arrest presages the eruption of severe disagreements between the military and civilian groups which have been sharing power in Sudan since June 1989.

But officials in the Sudanese Embassy in Geneva said that the opposition's reports about the arrests and the trial are untrue. They added: "They are a flight of fancy by the opposition, which thinks it can intimidate the regime before the report of the Commission on Human Rights is discussed in Geneva."

Western Sahara

UK Urged To Pressure Morocco Over Peace Plan

LD2402095293 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Excerpt] The Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro [Polisario] has issued a statement in London in which it calls on the British Government to put pressure on the Moroccan regime with the aim of convincing it to respect the peace plan.

In its statement, the Polisario charges that Morocco is responsible for the aggravation of the Western Saharan issue as a result of its adherence to stances based on denying the legitimate rights of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Paper Hopes For Good Results From Christopher Tour

LD2302093893 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0755 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Kuwait, 23 Feb, KUNA—AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM said that yesterday's Kuwaiti-U.S. talks stressed the joint desire of the United States and Kuwait to put matters in their proper place in light of recent developments.

In today's editorial under the headline "We Want This Visit To Be a Decisive One," the paper expressed its hope that Christopher's visit to Kuwait and to the other capitals he has visited will be a great deal better than those undertaken by former U.S. secretaries of state.

The paper wrote that it hoped that good and immediate results will be reached by Christopher's visit, and that he will tackle the bleak and pressing problems of the region, because if not solved, they will reflect negatively on the White House. The paper expressed the hope that once his tour is over, Christopher will be able to convey the full vision to President Clinton.

The paper emphasized that if the United States is unable to solve the region's problems, nobody else can, because the United States expresses the will of the new world order.

Oil Minister Reviews Results of Visit to France

LD2102120893 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1035 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 21 Feb (KUNA)—Oil Minister 'Ali Ahmad al-Baghli said that during his visit to Paris he discussed with French officials the question of energy tax and oil cooperation between the two countries, political subjects concerning Kuwaiti prisoners, and the issue of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border demarcation.

The oil minister told newsmen on his return from Paris last night that he discussed with the French industry minister the question of an energy tax.

Minister al-Baghli said he wished that an energy tax would not be adopted until after consultation with oil-producing and oil-consuming countries to avoid any misunderstanding.

He said: Our point of view is that the energy tax will not reduce the consumption of oil. It actually places a burden on the consumer and on the countries that import goods from industrialized nations.

The minister said that during his visit he met French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. He said that he informed the French foreign minister of the results of the recent OPEC meetings and discussed with him political issues and the need for Iraqi compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. [passage omitted]

He said the French minister confirmed France's firm support on these issues. Al-Baghli also confirmed the identical nature of Kuwait-French views on the subjects he raised. [passage omitted]

Statement Issued on Italian Official's Visit

LD2002235093 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1505 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Kuwait, 20 Feb [KUNA]—Kuwait today expressed its appreciation for Italy's stand on the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners of war, hostages, and others who still languish in the prisons and detention camps of the Iraqi regime. This was said in a statement by Kuwaiti Defense Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Sabah during his meeting with Italian Defense Minister Salvo Ando today.

The Kuwaiti defense minister praised Italy's support and participation in the battle for the liberation of Kuwait.

The Italian defense minister stressed the need to work for securing the release of the Kuwaiti POW's and hostages. He also stressed the need to unify the attitudes and to work for realizing stability and strengthening security in the Gulf area.

According to the Ministry of Defense statement, the two sides were in agreement on the need to bolster bilateral cooperation and hold talks with the aim of reaching an agreement over the question of the participation of the two countries' armed forces in joint training and on the need to step up the exchange of visits and contacts between Kuwaiti and Italian military officials.

They also agreed on the need to increase the participation of Italian industry in rebuilding and bolstering Kuwait's defensive means as well as drawing up detailed programs relating to the various industries and also the need to work for their promotion and development.

Within this framework, the two sides have agreed on the need to draw up, as soon as possible, a final draft of the memorandum of understanding and put it into operation and ensure its continuation in the field of cooperation in the various sectors of training and defense equipment.

The two ministers expressed their happiness at the results achieved in the naval sector. These results will be implemented from tomorrow in Kuwait's territorial waters and part of this is the visit by the two Italian frigates Libeccio and Zeffiro.

The Ministry of Defense said that the talks between the Kuwaiti and Italian defense ministers took place in a warm, friendly, and constructive atmosphere.

Defense Official on Military Expenditure Plans

LD2402092293 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0720 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Kuwait, 24 Feb (KUNA)—Colonel Muhammad Jasim al-Sirri, director of moral guidance and public

relations at the Defense Ministry, said in a press interview published here today that "the Defense Ministry's budget amounts to 3.5 billion Kuwaiti dinars and will be spent over the coming period of 12 years to organize the army, arm it, and rebuild the military installations."

He pointed out in an interview with AL-WATAN published here today that "the ministry is currently studying the purchase of new weapons, and the source and kind of these weapons have not yet been decided." Col. Sirri added: "The Defense Ministry has concluded contracts to buy Patriot missiles and the American Abrams tank, in addition to the combat vehicle Warrior" within the framework of an arms deal worth $15 billion extendable until the end of the present decade.

It is worth mentioning that the Kuwaiti Air Force has received 23 of the 40 planes of the multi-purpose F-18 type, and the Air Force is also studying the possibility of buying new military helicopters.

Minister on Continuing Arms Plan, Budget Cuts

LD2102212693 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1540 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Cairo, 21 February (KUNA)—Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah said in a newspaper interview published here today that the Iraqi threat still exists and that the Kuwaitis still feel concerned and in danger.

Shaykh Sa'ud went on to say in a statement to ROSE AL-YUSUF that the Kuwaiti armament plan would continue for the next 10 years, according to a set timetable. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Sa'ud pointed to a reduction in the state budget and stressed that this is necessary and inevitable. The reduction, he said, will be introduced next year and will continue for five years. He also said that it is necessary to keep a balance between earnings and spending, particularly in the shadow of continued cuts in oil prices. He explained that the reduction in the state budget will not affect the commitments made by Kuwait to other states through the development fund, and added that rationalization will be carried out within the framework of local projects, some of which could be deferred.

Minister Departs for Spain, Latin America

LD2102143793 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] Kuwait City, 21 Feb (KUNA)—Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah today left for Spain, the first leg of a tour that will also take him to Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, Chile, and Cape Verde, where he will deliver messages from the amir of Kuwait to the presidents of those countries.

The minister told KUNA before his departure that the goal of the tour was to explain the most prominent issue preoccupying the Kuwaiti Government and people, namely the question of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees in the jails of the Iraqi regime, which does not recognize the demarcated border with Kuwait or implement UN Security Council resolutions.

Al-Sabah said: "The Iraqi regime is seeking to come out of the isolation imposed upon it by the international community following its invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and is trying hard to win the sympathy of some Arab states so that they will support lifting the blockade against it. I am certain, however, that those states are very familiar with the Iraqi regime's games and cannot trust it."

The Kuwaiti minister explained that his tour to those countries would result in intensive information activity and meetings with information officials to inform them of the real truth of the situation in the region, contrary to the lies and fabrications of the Iraqi media.

Budget Deficit Expected To Decrease in 1993

LD2402100093 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0735 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 24 February, KUNA—Shaykh Salim 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sabah, governor of the Central Bank, said in a press interview published here today that the deficit in the general budget will be reduced more over the coming financial years, pointing out that the deficit of the 1992-93 financial year is expected to fall below 60 percent of that of the previous financial year.

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah said in an interview he gave to AL-WATAN that the budget deficit in the 1991-92 financial year was an exceptional deficit because the Iraqi invasion had negative effects on the volume of the state's reserves represented by the foreign investments and on the situation of the general budget.

He added that "this does not in any way mean that there is fear of the government's inability to pay the salaries and wages of its employees after a few years," pointing out that the estimated oil revenues for the present and coming financial years will reach 2.2 billion Kuwaiti dinars and 2.9 billion dinars against expected expenditure for the salaries and wages clause of around 1.03 billion dinars and 1.08 billion dinars, respectively. This indicates that the talk about the inability of the government to pay the salaries after many years is not in reality based on accurate bases. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Salim said that due to the bank's keen desire to provide the Kuwait dinar, in all its denominations, with complete confidence at the local and international levels, it found it necessary to work toward issuing a new edition with a new design and using high-quality paper, in addition to introducing the best technical and security features arrived at by the banknotes industry. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Paper Sees Positive Aspects in Christopher Comments

LD2302095293 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0650 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Riyadh, 23 Feb (SPA)—[passage omitted] Concerning U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the Kingdom, AL-MADINAH said that the visit of the U.S. secretary of state has confirmed a number of facts, among which are America's commitment to the security of the Gulf, the need for the Baghdad regime to comply with all international resolutions, America's commitment to becoming a full partner in the peace talks, and its evaluation and appreciation of the pioneering Saudi role which strives for the continuation of the peace march and pushes it forward in accordance with the Security Council resolutions in connection with the Palestinian cause and the right of the Palestinians to an independent homeland with Jerusalem for its capital.

It pointed out that Washington's commitment to participating fully in the peace process means finding a quick solution to the deportees' issue, and that is by implementing Resolution 799 which stipulates their return without conditions. [passage omitted]

The newspaper concluded by saying that the final result of the U.S. secretary of state's visit is that relations between the Kingdom and the United States are based on trust, clarity, and respect, bases which bring benefits to both countries.

On the same subject, 'UKAZ wrote that while it is very early to judge the extent of the success of the U.S. secretary of state's visit in achieving its intended goals, i.e. to give a push to the peace process and overcome the obstacles which encounter it, it is fair, however, to mention that the U.S. secretary's statements have thus far included numerous positive aspects and bases which agree with the fundamentals for achieving a just peace and stability in the region which the Arabs have been calling for.

It referred to Christopher's affirmation that President Clinton is committed to making the United State a full partner in the peace talks, pointing out that this is what the Arabs have long been calling for, which Israel rejected, and that this is the desired role from the United States that will enable it to play a real role in pushing the peace efforts forward. [passage omitted]

King Appeals for Muslims at Start of Ramadan

LD2202144293 Riyadh SPA in English 1229 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] Riyadh, Feb 22, SPA—Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and commander of the National Guard have made a fresh appeal to warring Afghan Mojahedin leaders and Somali factions to end bloodshed and foster Islamic brotherhood.

They made this appeal in a message on the start of the blessed month of Ramadan, contained in a statement, which was read on their behalf by Information Minister 'Ali al-Sha'ir on Saudi Televsion last night.

The message was addressed to the Saudi citizens and all Muslim nations and peoples on this blessed occasion.

They referred to the sad plight of Muslims in different parts of the world, especially that of the Palestinian deportees who have been thrown out of their homes by Israel which has committed the most grave crime in the framework of its aggressive practices against the Palestinian people and who are braving difficult conditions and harsh climatic conditions in the no-man's land in soutl. Lebanon. They congratulated Muslims worldwide on this auspicious occasion.

King Fahd deplored the intransigence of Israel on the deportees issue and urged the international community to double its efforts to implement the Security Council Resolution 799 which demands the return of all Palestinian deportees expelled by Israel.

King Fahd also noted the plight of the Somali Muslim people who were facing death from hunger every day in hundreds in the worst famine known in the contemporary history because of the bloody fighting going on for several years between the Somali factions.

He noted the efforts made by the Kingdom at all levels to bring about peace in Somalia.

King Fahd also referred to the situation in the Muslim Afghanistan with deep pain as Mojahedin were fighting each other and said the Kingdom has exerted its utmost efforts to assist the Afghan Mojahedin in their struggle to liberate their country until victory was achieved.

King Fahd also noted the tragedy of the Muslim Bosnian people who were facing a genocidal war at the hands of Serbs and the suffering of Muslim minorities.

He urged all international organisations and every peace loving state and person to double their efforts to implement the resolutions of the U.N. and the Security Council to ensure the return of the Palestinian deportees and the halt of Serbs' aggression on Bosnian Muslim people.

Yemen

Oil Minister Returns From Talks in Saudi Arabia

JN2302181093 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Excerpt] Brother Salih Abu-Bakr Bin-Husaynun, minister of oil and mineral resources, returned to Sanaa this

evening following a working visit of several days to Saudi Arabia. During his visit, the minister conveyed a letter from brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, to his brother King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques. The message concerns strengthening the brotherly ties between the two fraternal countries. [passage omitted]

Egyptian Proposal on Diplomat's Posting Welcomed

JN2302182093 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Feb (INA)—Iraq has welcomed Egypt's proposal to bolster its interests section in Baghdad by appointing an Egyptian diplomat with the rank of counselor. This came in a statement to INA today by an official source at the Foreign Ministry. The source said that the Iraqi Foreign Ministry welcomes the Egyptian proposal and, on the basis of reciprocity, it will assign an Iraqi diplomat with the rank of counselor to look after the Iraqi interests section in Cairo.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry made this proposal on the third of last month.

Radio Says Syria Separates Talks, Deportee Issue

JN2302190093 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Report carried within the "Spotlight on News" program]

[Text] At the end of his tour of a number of Arab capitals involved in the settlement with the Zionist entity, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has said that the settlement talks will resume soon. The Syrian regime's swift response to the U.S. Administration's request to resume negotiations brought to an end U.S. fears that the deportee issue would be linked to the resumption of talks.

Christopher stressed that the Syrian regime's stands are in harmony with the new U.S. trend and move in the region. This is despite the fact that Christopher has given no pledges to put pressure on the Zionist entity to change its intransigent stand on compliance with international legitimacy to allow the deportees' collective return to their homeland. He noted that the views of the United States are in agreement with that of the Zionist entity in tackling this issue, giving Zionists the freedom to allow a number of deportees to return home in the future.

During his tour of Cairo, Amman, Damascus, Riyadh, Kuwait, and Lebanon via Cyprus, the U.S. secretary was met with a hasty response from the Arab parties involved in the settlement process to resume the talks. Meanwhile, popular anger escalated in the occupied Arab territories.

Gulf States' 'Irrational' Arms Deals Criticized

JN2102103293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0715 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Feb (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has criticized the Arab Gulf states' irrational armament programs, saying that these states' huge financial investments have been directed to serve the Zionist development and settlement programs in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories.

In an analysis today, AL-THAWRAH, which reflects the views of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, notes that the Gulf states have budgeted huge amounts from their oil revenues to purchase weapons for which they do not have a technical and scientific cadre capable of managing and using them. The paper says that last year only the Gulf shaykhdoms and emirates allocated $48 billion for such deals.

The paper says that the Gulf regimes have been fooled into accepting armament deals for outdated systems or ones with low efficiency and performance in the field.

AL-THAWRAH links these expensive armament programs by the Arab Gulf states to two contradictory situations in Washington and Tel Aviv. First, an acute crisis has been sweeping the U.S. economy for a long time. It became more complicated during the Bush era. This has forced President Clinton to set a plan to rectify the course of his country's economy, increase its efficiency, and reactivate it. In the second situation, Tel Aviv has declared that it has received $30 billion over the past 30 years in the form of gifts from the United States. In addition, it received a further $10 billion to finance the absorption of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Concluding, the paper says that the huge financial gifts given away by Washington have not been deducted from the treasury of the sick U.S. economy, but from the pockets of the Gulf rulers who accepted to relinquish the Arab nation's wealth in order to turn junk Western weapons into hard currency. Consequently, it is the Arabs who are shouldering U.S. and Western commitments toward Israel, the enemy of the Arabs.

Barzan al-Tikriti on Preserving National Unity

JN2302163693 Baghdad INA in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, Feb 23, INA—An Iraqi paper has affirmed that Iraq's present goal is to preserve its geographic unity and social unity through the unification and the development and national education.

A study written by Mr. Barzan al-Tikriti, published today by AL-JUMHURIYAH newspaper said paying attention to rights and duties and deepening the national awareness is the biggest and strongest method to reply to the perils besetting us.

The most important issue in this very current stage is not to succumb to the embargo imposed on Iraq and not yield to the illusion under any circumstance because it deceives us of the facts of our affairs, the paper asserted.

It lashed out at methods followed by the "Iraqi opposition" in the West, saying it trespasses all psychological and moral barriers when it directly contacted the political departments, foreign ministries and the intelligence

services in the West for urging them to speed up overthrowing the regime in Iraq with a view to seizing the power.

This method is considered as would the telling blow against them at the national level and it is a bizarre way contrary to traditions and rules of the national political work not only in Iraq but in all world states, the paper confirmed. [sentence as received]

The paper made it clear that the method of those would certainly affect Iraq and its demographic unity because it paves the way to the foreigner to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs with a view to dismembering it.

The study asserted that the imperialist states had conspired on Iraq by various means, like containing the so-called opposition and igniting new conflicts in the region with the aim of destroying Iraq's economy, role and cpabilities.

The Iraqi leadership and the decision-making centre in it, namely, the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party (ABSP) had darely led Iraq and achieved brilliant accomplishments at the internal and economic levels following the nationalization of the foreign oil companies and other levels.

The study said that the Iraqi leadership had achieved important issues in the fields of economy and development and was bound to work at personal freedoms, press and multi-party system level, because the ABSP believes in the national will that is a right and responsibility for each citizen.

The study held the imperialist circles and reactionary forces in the region responsible for disrupting this goal, the important one in life of the Iraqis, while the worst thing is the resort of the opposition to receive orders from the Western intelligence services for toppling the regime.

The study called upon the so-called the opposition to cut relations with foreign forces and prepare the national alternatives acceptable by the decision-making centre in Baghdad and put the affairs in the straight path to all parties.

The study surprised of the behaviour of the so-called opposition and other Arab forces by entirely depending on the United States to topple the regime in Iraq and capturing the reins of power, while the United States had failed to realise that and admitted by itself its plastering failure. [sentence as received]

The formula of peaceful co-existence, understanding and joint interests among the region's states and peoples is the only dialect understood by the decision-maker in Iraq.

The study stressed that the opposition should not seek for more than its size and to have reasonable and acceptable role after cutting ties with the foreign forces and to be real national opposition.

It called on the Arabs to work out a comprehensive long-term strategy to deal with the deteriorating situation in the region. Referring that the superpowers are now seeking for creating new conflicts with a view to aborting the emergence of an effective power in the region to revive hopes of the Arabs in the Arab peninsula and the Arbia felix.

Kurdish Leader Interviewed on Talks in Damascus

PM2302165093 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Feb 93 pp1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Talabani Expects Syrian Facilities for Kurds"]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], yesterday resumed his contacts in Damascus. In a statement to AL-HAYAH, which contacted him by telephone from London, Talabani said that his talks with the pro-Syrian pan-Arab trend representatives resulted in a cooperation agreement between the Kurdistan Front and that trend which, however, reaffirmed its rejection of the Salah al-Din conference.

Talabani said that his visit to Damascus, which will continue for several more days, has been "very successful." He added that "Syria no longer has any apprehensions about Kurdish intentions, and I expect Damascus to provide facilities for Iraqi Kurds."

He also said that efforts were under way to arrange a meeting of the main factions of the Iraqi opposition, with the participation of the pan-Arab trend, to find a solution to their outstanding problems.

PUK sources in Damascuss have told AL-HAYAH that Talabani took to Damascus a plan for the pan-Arab trend to join the opposition's "Iraqi National Congress" with assurances that that trend would be given adequate representation.

But pan-Arab trend sources have emphasized that they "were not interested in the Salah-al-Din conference." They told AL-HAYAH that Talabani "is a brother and a friend, there are continuous consultations between us, and our relations are solid because they (the Kurds) are a part of the Iraqi people." They added that the pan-Arab and Islamic factions (in Damascus) "are not interested in the conference's institutions or political line."

They explained that Talabani submitted to the National Action Bureau, which embraces the pan-Arab and Islamic factions close to Damascus, a plan "for the rectification of the line pursued by the Salah-al-Din conference, but we believe that the conference does not fulfill the aspirations of the average Arab man in the street because the figures who managed the confernce do not know what goes on in that street." They reaffirmed the need for a dialogue among the pan-Arab, Islamic, Kurdish, and democratic parties "on the basis of Iraq's unity of territory, people, and entity." They said that the

opposition's efforts should concentrate on toppling the Iraqi regime with insistence on Iraq's unity and opposition to the creation of "cantons in its north or south," and should also work for "political plurality and election of constitutional institutions." [passage omitted]

UN Arms Inspection Team Leader Rebuts U.S. Criticism

PM2302143093 Milan EUROPEO in Italian 19 Feb 93 pp 56-57

["Exclusive" interview with Maurizio Zifferero, leader of UN arms inspection team in Iraq, by Marco Restelli; place and date not given]

[Text] "The leader of the UN inspectors in Iraq is unwittingly playing into Saddam Husayn's hand." That is basically the accusation made in America against Maurizio Zifferero, 62 years old, an Italian scientist with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, who is working in Iraq on behalf of the United Nations. This is how Zifferero counterattacks in this exclusive interview for EUROPEO:

[Restelli] Since the end of the Gulf War, you have been responsible for monitoring the destruction of Saddam Husayn's atomic arsenal. But now the Americans are accusing you of negligence: For example, they say that you revealed in advance your programs for "surprise" visits to Saddam's arsenals in places which may have been full of Iraqi secret service hidden microphones. That is said to have ruined the surprise effect, giving the Iraqis time to hide the forbidden installations. What is your answer?

[Zifferero] These accusations can only be defined in one way: Trash. We have been "tempered" by two years of showdowns with the Iraqis and we know perfectly well how to behave: A team of about 20 technicians frequently goes to Iraq to carry out inspections without warning. But be careful: Who is accusing us? Certainly not the U.S. Administration. With both Bush's and Clinton's men relations have been and are excellent. The accusations are being made by a scientific lobby in Washington (financed by Wisconsin University) which is trying to influence U.S. foreign policy. In this case, they want to deliver a blow to the IAEA through me. That is why they used the insinuations of a couple of people who used to belong to the UN inspection teams in Iraq but, because of their questionable behavior, were later excluded from new missions. In other words these technicians "torpedoed" by the agency had grounds for personal ill feeling against me...

[Restelli] But why should a scientific lobby in Washington be interested in attacking the IAEA? Surely not only out of personal ill feeling!

[Zifferero] No, of course not. We could surmise that certain U.S. circles are interested in stealing skilled people from the agency in order to create a new body in its place, possibly with headquarters in New York and easier for the Americans to control... Anyhow, those who accuse us only do so by inference. The facts are on our side.

[Restelli] So let us turn to the facts: What is the state of Iraq's atomic arsenal? Can Saddam still frighten us?

[Zifferero] Before the Gulf War, Saddam was developing an extremely dangerous nuclear program: Within a few years he would have had the atom bomb. The program was based on seven nuclear plants which have, however, now been destroyed. We UN inspectors have gotten possession of secret Iraqi documents which prove that Saddam's nuclear program has been dismantled. There is only the slightest possibility that Iraq has managed to hide important nuclear installations. After two years of monitoring and programmed destruction, we can state that Saddam, at least on a nuclear level, has been neutralized.

[Restelli] So why did the Americans fire Tomahawk missiles on the nuclear plant at Za'faraniyah, south of Baghdad, a month ago?

[Zifferero] That was precisely one of the seven Iraqi plants: It had not yet been destroyed but it was under the agency's complete control. The plant had been converted for peaceful use, but the Americans chose to bomb it anyway. In any event, today in Iraq there are no longer even any civilian nuclear installations.

[Restelli] And the chemical weapons? Have they been destroyed too?

[Zifferero] They are under the control of a special commission set up by the UN Security Council. According to the commission's latest reports, 95 percent of Iraq's chemical arsenal has been destroyed.

[Restelli] In short, do we no longer have to fear Saddam Husayn? Is there not a danger that once the storm has passed, the Iraqi regime will rearm?

[Zifferero] The danger will arise if a long-term monitoring program of Iraqi activities cannot be set up. It is on that front that I will be busy until 1994: The problem is that for the time being the Iraqis have not fully accepted the UN resolutions which oblige them to cooperate with the inspectors and provide lists of the foreign companies which contributed to the realization of their nuclear program. But it is only a question of time: They will give in.

U.S. Secretary of State's Visit Continues

Clinton Message Delivered

TA2302202893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] U.S. President Bill Clinton has written to Yitzhaq Rabin saying that he vows to act personally toward achieving peace and toward a reconciliation between Israel and all its neighbors. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that this was the content of the letter conveyed by Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the prime minister.

President Clinton further wrote that the United States will be a full partner in the process and that the cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem will grow.

In a meeting with Palestinian representatives tonight, Secretary Christopher made similar statements with regard to his country's part in the peace process. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that the Palestinians handed the visitor a message from PLO chief 'Arafat voicing the Palestinian commitment to the peace process.

First Round of Talks Reported

TA2302175593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1705 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz]

[Excerpt] We have additional information on the first round of talks between the U.S. guests and the top Israeli echelon. To recall, the meeting with the prime minister dealt mainly with the bilateral talks. The meeting was attended, in addition to Prime Minister Rabin, by Foreign Minister Peres, the chief of staff, Major General Dani Rothschild, coordinator of government activities in the territories, and Elyaqim Rubinstein, Itamar Rabinovich and Uri Lubrani, heads of the Israeli delegations to the negotiations. The official message emanating from the meeting was that all the Arab countries want to resume negotiations. Later it transpired that in Egypt Secretary of State Christopher and his entourage were told that it will be very difficult to resume the political process without solving the deportees problem. All the participants in today's meeting noted that Egypt has an important role to play in advancing the peace talks.

From today's talks it also transpired that Edward Djerejian has great faith in President al-Asad's sincerity. Other members of the American team did not evince such enthusiasm as that displayed by Djerejian. [passage omitted]

Peace Talks Discussed

TA2302195393 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Report by political correspondent Gadi Sukenik]

[Excerpt] The following information comes out of the veil of secrecy which encompassed Secretary of State Christopher's first day in Israel: All the Arab countries that participate in the peace talks are interested in resuming the talks as soon as possible. The Palestinians remain the main problem, and negotiations with them constitute the focal point of the visit to Israel. The prime minister agrees to implement more easing measures in the territories on the condition they facilitate the peace talks. The Americans are extremely satisfied about what they have heard so far and are considering resuming the talks in March, instead of April as was believed earlier. The Americans believe Ramadan will not constitute an obstacle. Secretary Christopher brought with him an encouraging message from Syria. After hearing about the Syrian willingness to advance, Prime Minister Rabin continues to assess that the imminent breakthrough could very well be along the Jerusalem-Damascus axis.

President al-Asad and Prime Minister Rabin will travel to Washington in the next few weeks, apparently separately, and perhaps they will bring new tidings to President Clinton. [passage omitted]

Christopher Meets With Palestinians

TA2302181593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] The meeting between Secretary of State Christopher and the Palestinian representatives has ended. Following the meeting Mayor Ilyas Frayj of Bethlehem told our correspondent Moti Amir that the meeting was mainly devoted to the deportees problem. Frayj claims that Secretary Christopher did not propose any solutions to the deportees problem, but rather reiterated the proposal he made in the Arab countries prior to his arrival in Israel.

Ilyas Frayj emphasized that he and his colleagues are convinced the Palestinians must attend that peace process now that all the Arab countries have expressed willingness to attend the talks. He added, however, that the deportee problem remains to be solved.

More on Meeting With Palestinians

TA2302202193 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Excerpts] The meeting between Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the Palestinian delegation for the peace talks ended a short time ago. The Palestinians, headed by Faysal al-Husayni, demanded to include East Jerusalem and Palestinian diaspora representatives in the talks. They emphasized that without solving the deportee problem the Palestinians will not be able to return to the negotiating table. The delegation submitted to Christopher a letter from 'Arafat requesting that dialogue with the PLO be resumed. The meeting was held at the U.S. Consulate building in East Jerusalem. Our correspondent Amir Hay reports:

[Begin recording] [Hay] In the one and one-half hour meeting the Palestinians demanded that Christopher find a way to solve the deportee problem. Al-Husayni and his colleagues emphasized that as long as the problem is not solved the Palestinians cannot return to the negotiating table in Washington. The Palestinians presented Christopher with a report they compiled regarding human rights violations in the territories. The report concentrates on two main issues: the demolition of houses in Khan Yunus, and what they claim to be the rise in the number of children killed by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers over the last year.

Secretary Christopher listened to the Palestinians, but after they ended he asked them—according to one of the delegation members who attended the meeting—how long they intend to continue presenting demands, adding it was time to get down to business. [passage omitted]

Tomorrow, the Palestinians will meet Christopher in the U.S. Consulate in West Jerusalem. This is what Hanan 'Ashrawi said in a press conference following the meeting:

['Ashrawi, in English] I would say it was a very candid meeting. There is nothing new or earth-shattering to report, and we hope to be able to discuss details tomorrow. [end recording]

Peres on Peace Process

TA2302164893 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Studio interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres on the daily " 'Erev Hadash" current affairs program, by Rafi Reshef "a few minutes ago"—recorded]

[Text] [Reshef] Would it be correct to state that the obstacles barring the resumption of the peace talks have been removed?

[Peres] No, not yet.

[Reshef] What is the problem? The Palestinians?

[Peres] Yes.

[Reshef] Will they act against the Syrians despite the favorable views in Damascus of which we heard through the envoy [not further specified]?

[Peres] First of all, an effort is being made to make sure that all the parties, including the Palestinians, participate in the negotiations. Mr. Christopher will meet with them today and tomorrow. Until he does, neither he nor we will know exactly what their stand is.

[Reshef] Would it be correct to say that the U.S. secretary of state has brought favorable messages from his tour of Arab countries?

[Peres] He brought favorable impressions from most places.

[Reshef] As far as you have been able to observe, Mr. Peres, is there a difference between the operational methods of the present and the former secretaries of state?

[Peres] I will not draw comparisons. I can only say that Mr. Christopher approaches matters earnestly and seriously, that he does his homework, and that he evinces a lot of good will.

[Reshef] I understand, however, that while in Damascus, he spoke of full involvement, but here he speaks of being more active than before. Do we know to what extent the Americans would like to be involved in the negotiations?

[Peres] Look, if he a full partner of ours, we are full partners of his. Partnership is a reciprocal matter. He explained that he is neither an arbitrator nor a mediator, but rather a road paver or a bridge builder. We understand that, as in the past, the United States does not intend to either force or initiate a solution.

[Reshef] I would like to know: Are Jimmy Carter and the Camp David accords a model to be emulated, or do they belong in the coercion category?

[Peres] There is no talk of models. The best model may have been the deportee affair. The agreement achieved between the prime minister and the secretary of state on the deportee affair and the way it was achieved are a good example of what is referred to as over-involvement [me'uravut yeter].

[Reshef] Does the present administration see itself adhering to the foundations established in Madrid?

[Peres] He did not say that, but we can assume it does, because they seem to want the next round to start where the previous one ended. What he said was that they will be more involved, and we welcome that. We welcome both the active U.S. involvement in the bilateral negotiations and even more active involvement in the multilateral negotiations, for the simple reason that the multilateral negotiations are attended by some 30 participants from outside the Middle East as well as 13 Middle East countries.

[Reshef] Have we been able to learn how high the Middle East issue is on the Americans' list of priorities?

[Peres] We certainly were. The very fact that this is the Clinton Administration secretary of state's first mission attests to the importance they attach to the Middle East. And they have stressed this attitude as well. Mr. Christopher has stressed that his mission is evidence of the top priority accorded by the new administration to the Middle East, and even more so to peace in the Middle East.

[Reshef] Based on messages from Damascus, Mr. Peres, how close are we to the signing of a document of intentions with Syria?

[Peres] We have not yet reached the stage of doing business, as they say. What is becoming increasingly clear is that basically, Syrian thinking has undergone a change. Until now, Syria toyed with the idea of strategic parity and perhaps another option that would force Israel to comply with its wishes. Today the Syrians know that there is no USSR, and hence, no option of strategic parity; that there is no way Syria can attack Israel militarily; and that the only truly open and right way for Syria and us is to reach an agreement through direct negotiations.

[Reshef] Do you think we have reached the stage where Israel should decide on the extent of the compromise it is ready to accept in the Golan?

[Peres] Mentally, but not out loud. I mean, not publicly.

[Reshef] Not publicly, but is it perhaps time for a secret internal document?

[Peres] Yes, a secret document that will be leaked a little. I think it is too soon.

[Reshef] Mr. Peres, do you believe the much-desired breakthrough in negotiations with Syria will be achieved in 1993?

[Peres] I am not certain, but I believe there is a chance of that happening. Moreover, I believe it is very desirable to achieve a breakthrough this year, because it will be even more difficult to achieve understanding in the ensuing years.

[Reshef] Why?

[Peres] Look, even in Israel, as we get down to details, hearts beat faster. As for the Arabs, the more they see what they are not going to get, the stronger the opposition arises on their side. There are so many places throughout the world that need attention, so many burning issues, that the intensity toward the Middle East may abate if no progress is achieved.

[Reshef] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, thank you very much.

[Peres] You are welcome.

Demonstrations During Visit

TA2302163993 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Report by Steve Leibowitz]

[Excerpt] While U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was inside meeting with Prime Minister Rabin, several groups of demonstrators were on a hill opposite the Prime Minister's Office, demonstrating their views. The main demonstration against withdrawal from the Golan Heights will be a mass procession later this evening from the Prime Minister's Office to the center of Jerusalem. But early this morning trucks arrived to dump mountains of Golan snow opposite the Prime Minister's Office. Their message to Secretary of State Christopher was clear: The Golan is not for sale.

The largest demonstration was at the tent encampment of opponents to the deportation. Several hundred Israeli Arabs, some Jews and families of the deportees from the territories held black flags and called for the immediate return of the expelled Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists. Israeli Arab town councils today staged a 2-hour strike in sympathy with the deportees. This is what Knesset Member 'Abd-al-Wahab Darawshah of the Arab Democratic Party had to say:

[Begin Darawshah recording] There are no negotiations without the Palestinian delegation, and I do not believe that any Arab delegation will appear to negotiations with the Israeli delegation without the Palestinians. [end recording]

Across the street victims of Arab terror erected a giant placard showing Yasir 'Arafat welcoming Christopher with a peace sign, while weapons are peeking out of his pockets. [passage omitted]

Peres Discusses Christopher Talks

TA2402064493 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by correspondent Sheli Yehimovich—live]

[Text] [Yehimovich] A few hours before the U.S. secretary of state's arrival, you said that you could not imagine the United States making additional demands over the deportees and that the Israeli-U.S. agreement on this subject was the last word. However, we now hear that Egypt and Syria—but mainly the Palestinians—insist on such a linkage. Is this why invitations to the next round of talks are being delayed?

[Peres] What I said is definitely true: The United States has made no additional demands on Israel. To Mr. Christopher's credit, it may be said that he is definitely honoring the agreement he reached with the prime minister, one of whose clauses was that no further demands would be made of Israel.

[Yehimovich] Even though the United States is honoring the agreement, has not a dynamic been created whereby it will be impossible to hold the next round of talks without additional demands over the deportees?

[Peres] I do not think so. I think Israel has gone a long and right way on the issue, and I believe that the Palestinians are simply misinterpreting some of Israel's positions. They harp on all sorts of unfounded notions, such as the notion that Israel, as it were, is not willing to abide by UN resolutions, which is not true. Even the official letter we sent to the Security Council chairman specifically states that the arrangement reached with the United States complies with Resolution 799.

I think the Palestinians will ultimately realize that they have no choice but to return to the negotiating table. It will really be absurd if we are faced with a scenario in which the Palestinians are subordinate to Hamas and the Arab countries are subordinate to the Palestinians. This would result in Hamas negotiating for the Arab countries and the Palestinians instead of themselves. We must wait for the next session of talks between Mr. Christopher and the Palestinians to see the results.

[Yehimovich] Having said that, do you see Israel making additional gestures on the deportees under certain circumstances?

[Peres] I reiterate that I do not think so. I do not think it is necessary. I think the door has been opened wide enough to allow the negotiations to go through. I believe we should be patient and see what happens today in the meeting between Mr. Christopher and the Palestinians.

[Yehimovich] There is talk about the United States increasing its involvement in the process. Judging by Christopher's visit, how would you characterize the nature of the new U.S. Administration's involvement so far?

[Peres] I think Mr. Christopher's trip proves the following points:

First, that the Clinton administration also attributes utmost importance to the Middle East; to wit, his first trip abroad was to the Middle East for the sake of the peace process.

Second, that the United States is indeed prepared to increase its involvement but with two restrictions:

1) it will not impose a solution;

2) it has no intention of becoming some kind of arbiter or mediator.

Its role is to assist and to bridge the gaps, and it proved its ability in this sphere from the very outset of the deportee crisis. The first issue on the agenda of this administration, which is actually 33 days old, was to find a solution to a very complex issue. It found one, and this solution passed its first hurdle in the Security Council. The Council actually said it considered the Israeli-U.S. agreement an adequate response, at least in spirit, to the Security Council resolution, and it struck the issue from its agenda.

[Yehimovich] How do we get the Palestinians back to the negotiating table? After all, the talks are pointless without them.

[Peres] First, I think the Palestinians must decide where they are headed. When there are two meetings, the first by nature is of a more declarative character, while the second is more practical. Not that I know many details about yesterday's meeting, but I assume it was more of a declarative nature, whereas today's session will be more practical.

[Yehimovich] Do you think that toward the end of his visit, Secretary Christopher will explicitly ask the prime minister: What concession are you Israelis really prepared to make on the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria? Will such a question be posed?

[Peres] I do not think so, because by nature the sides should be allowed to conduct the negotiations according to their own strategy and tactics. One should not expect answers that are more far-reaching than those given in the context of the negotiations, otherwise there would be no sense in negotiations. When one sits around the table, the table becomes the framework around and within which the talks and the negotiations are conducted. At this point, Israel's positions do not differ from those expressed in the last round of negotiations.

[Yehimovich] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, thank you very much.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 24 February carries a live telephone interview with Peres by correspondents Ya'el Dan and Mikha Friedman. Asked whether the United States is asking Israel to make additional gestures concerning autonomy in the territories, Peres says: "Saying that they are making such demands would be inaccurate because we, of our own free will and initiative, want to improve the situation in the territories. We need no encouragement from the United States in this matter. The territories have been opened to investment by anybody who so desires; we have eased conditions for investment and facilitated passage across the Jordan River bridges; we have allowed the conduct of politics, such as elections to various voluntary organizations. This means we also want the situation in the territories to improve rather than deteriorate." Asked whether Israel has heard from the United States that the Arab countries may return to the negotiations without the Palestinians, Peres says: "Time is a factor in such positions. It is only natural that, at this point, the Arab countries should want to pressure the United States to do everything in its power to return the Palestinians to the negotiating table. Therefore, in my opinion and as far as I know, all of them have expressed their willingness to return to the negotiating table. Although they did not establish a specific link between their return and that of the Palestinians, it seems that they have nevertheless made their final answer conditional on the return of the Palestinians."]

Golan Settlers Vow To Struggle for Sovereignty

TA2302193693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1705 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Excerpts] As soon as the U.S. secretary of state began his visit to Israel, heads of the Golan Settlements Committee convened a news conference in Jerusalem where they presented a covenant which, they said, bonds all the Golan inhabitants. Through the covenant, which has been signed by thousands Golan inhabitants, the Golan leaders stressed the Jewish people's right to the Golan Heights and their intention to wage a struggle against

every attempt to give up Israeli sovereignty over the Golan. Our correspondent Gil Litman attended the news conference:

To stress that consensus prevails, the news conference was conducted by a peculiar blend of Golan Heights residents: from right-wing Mikha'el Ben-Horin, who proclaims himself leader of the State of Judaea, down to Labor Party member Yehuda Volman, member of a Golan kibbutz. [passage omitted]

Eli Malka, chairman of the Golan Settlements Committee, says that only a short time ago, the Golan was visited by an aide to the prime minister and defense minister, who told the local inhabitants that the government had approved the establishment of a new permanent settlement in the Golan, to be settled by newly arrived immigrants.

[Begin Malka recording] He said there was approval in principle for the establishment of a permanent settlement in Brukhim, and we have been planning and waiting for that for a long time. There is an initial group of immigrants waiting for that. We are naturally glad the settlement will be established. [end recording]

Despite that, the Golan settlers complain that the government has been prohibiting the civilianization of Nahal Brigade pre-settlement Nimrod in northern Golan. [passage omitted]

Shahaq Comments on Golan Withdrawal Controversial

Says Security Possible

TA2402083993 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 24 Feb 93 pp 1, 15

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer]

[Excerpt] "Israel can safeguard its security even if there is a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights," Major General Amnon Shahaq, deputy chief of staff, said in a briefing to U.S. correspondents.

In the briefing to correspondents accompanying U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Gen. Shahaq was asked whether he can imagine a situation in which Israel exists in security after withdrawing from all of the Golan Heights. The deputy Army chief's answer was: "Yes. Otherwise, there is no hope of a peace accord."

American correspondents who participated in the briefing provided me with quotes from Gen. Shahaq's remarks to them. Shahaq also disclosed that IDF [Israel Defense Forces] think teams are holding deliberations on possible military scenarios if a peace settlement is reached with Syria.

The deputy chief of staff said that, if requested, the IDF will have "quick answers" on issues relating to the demilitarization of territories on the Golan Heights and finding alternatives for locations that currently provide Israel with early warnings in the event of an emergency situation. Nevertheless, Shahaq claimed that, at present, the IDF is not delineating maps "because it is hypothetical." He also said that a peace agreement between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights would give "Syria a bigger present than Israel." [passage omitted]

Denies Remarks

TA2402122993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Telephone interview with Major General Amnon Shahaq, deputy chief of staff, by Roni Daniyel—live]

[Text] [Daniyel] Let us put things in order. The words attributed to you in a briefing to correspondents yesterday are: Without a withdrawal from all of the Golan Heights, there is no hope of a peace accord. As you must have heard, these words have triggered a wave of furious reactions.

[Shahaq] First, there is no doubt that I did not utter such words. Incidentally, I have not yet seen the transcript and none of those who have something to say about it has talked to me. However, I do not suppose that I said with my own voice that without a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights there is no chance of peace. As best as I can recall, the question I answered was: What is the meaning of a withdrawal from the Golan Heights? What I meant to say—I do not recall the exact words—was that if it is not understood that we are talking about a withdrawal, the Syrians will not come to the peace process. I also said that decisions in Israel are made by the Israeli Government, and that the Army will execute any decision of the government. The Army does not demarcate borders, draw maps, or deal with withdrawals anywhere—and it does not do that today either. Neither did I say that we have working teams, because there is no such thing.

It seems to me that somebody used my words very cynically, for reasons that are apparently unrelated to me, but I was a convenient means in this specific case.

[Daniyel] Among other things, it was reported that as soon as you uttered the words attributed to you, a colonel from the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman's office nudged you and asked you to retract them.

[Shahaq] A colonel from the IDF spokesman's office does not nudge anybody. He just said: I think they took your answer to mean a full withdrawal, that you were talking about a full withdrawal in your answer. Then I went on talking. To the best of my knowledge, none of the people present interpreted my words that way. We met them yesterday morning, and so far I have not heard any of the foreign correspondents who were in the room quoting me that way. The question is: Why did the people who were with me in the room and stayed on until the end of the briefing not interpret my words that way? After all, for them, too, it would be a great story; it can make the headlines in other places, not just in Israel.

[Daniyel] Do you think some of the U.S. correspondents could have gotten the impression that what the deputy chief of staff said was that peace is unattainable without a withdrawal from all of the Golan Heights?

[Shahaq] I very much hope not, because I do not deal with that. My opinions make no difference at the moment, and I do not want to talk about them because I did not go there to air my personal opinions or those of the IDF, seeing that the IDF has no opinion on the question of withdrawals. The IDF does not voice opinions on such issues.

[Daniyel] But you did say that the IDF does not draw red lines.

[Shahaq] No, we did not talk about lines. I said that the IDF does not draw maps, and that the IDF will execute what the Israeli Government tells it to do. Toward the end of the briefing, I was asked a question about a hypothetical situation where there is peace and there are no threats against the State of Israel. I replied that, hypothetically, if there is peace, anything is possible and everything is open.

[Daniyel] Do you have any idea why so many people, including former comrades-in-arms, hastened to call for your dismissal, even before they read the full transcript of what you said?

[Shahaq] Obviously we are dealing with a sensitive issue, both politically and otherwise. We are dealing with a really sensitive issue. This sensitivity is also clear to me, but I may not have been entirely aware of it yesterday when I was talking. However, I have no doubt that I am not the issue in this case; at issue are the sensitivities which surfaced before what I said and which I believe will resurface as long as the question of peace negotiations with Syria is on the agenda. Therefore, as long as this question is being discussed, these sensitivities will persist.

[Daniyel] After this experience, will you be willing to conduct briefings in the future?

[Shahaq] I think we must explain our positions, and such experiences are apparently part of the occupational hazards.

[Daniyel] As far as you know, does the IDF have any contingency plans for a deployment in the Hula Valley in the event that the political level decides to pull out from all of the Golan Heights?

[Shahaq] I said it yesterday, and I am reiterating today: whether there are such plans or not, I do not think it is right to tell anybody about it or to discuss it on the radio or in a meeting with journalists. I said that the IDF has been living in the Golan Heights, that it knows every square inch of the Golan Heights very well, and that it will be able to give prompt answers to any question posed to it by the political level as soon as such a question is posed.

I would like to reiterate that it is not right to talk about such matters. We are dealing with many other issues at present, and answers must be given to concrete questions. I do not think that at this stage of the negotiations there have been concrete questions. We are still very far from questions concerning places, security needs, and so forth. When we get to that, the IDF has all the tools to give rapid and professional answers to those questions.

[Daniyel] Have the defense minister or the chief of staff talked to you about your remarks? Have they asked you to clarify what you really said?

[Shahaq] I am quite far away at the moment. I spoke with the chief of staff some time ago. I believe he has read the transcript and knows what was said.

[Daniyel] Sir, I thank you very much and hope everything has been cleared up now.

[Shahaq] Thank you.

Opposition Urges Shahaq Firing

TA2402103893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Opposition Knesset members [MK] are urging the defense minister to fire Deputy Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq because of the remarks attributed to him in a briefing with U.S. correspondents to the effect that without a withdrawal from the entire Golan Heights there is no hope for a peace process. The remarks were published in today's edition of YEDI'OT AHARONOT.

Likud MK Eliyahu Ben-Elisar told our correspondent Hayim Hecht that he has learned that an officer from the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman's office who was present in the briefing observed to the deputy chief of staff that he had better rephrase his remarks, but Major General Shahaq insisted on his original version. MK Ben-Elisar says the remarks are particularly serious because they were made in the course of negotiations on the future of the Golan.

Our Knesset correspondent points out that the National Religious Party and Tzomet are also urging that the deputy chief of staff be fired. Interviewed by our correspondent Razi Barqay, MK Refa'el Eytan said that Shahaq's remarks have impaired Israel's ability to conduct negotiations.

In response, MK Ori Or, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said it is astonishing that the opposition demands to fire a general who favors withdrawal, whereas when other generals spoke against withdrawal the opposition did not protest. Nevertheless, Ori Or agrees that at such a sensitive time the deputy chief of staff should not have said what he did.

MK Eli Dayan, chairman of the opposition, has also called on the prime minister to alert the deputy chief of staff to the severity of his remarks and to caution him not to repeat them.

Rabin Declares 'Full Confidence'

TA2402123793 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] The prime minister's bureau has just reacted to the interview with Deputy Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq. In the wake of an inaccurate quote of remarks made by the deputy chief of staff about the Golan Heights—which he clarified in an interview with Qol Yisra'el—the prime minister says: The government's position concerning peace negotiations with Syria is permanent, known, and remains unchanged. This position has also been made plain to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his visit to Israel.

Responding to the criticism by political sources, the prime minister and defense minister says that he has full confidence in the deputy chief of staff, Major General Amnon Shahaq.

Gaza Resident Killed, 4 Wounded in Clash

TA2302203493 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Excerpts] One man was killed and four were wounded in a clash with IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers in Rafah's Shabura refugee camp. Our correspondent Moti Amir reports that the soldiers were attacked with stones as they entered Shabura. They opened fire, killing 'Awwad Surdi, an UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Agency] clinic employee, and wounding four. [passage omitted]

Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at cars driving on the Pisgat Ze'ev-Ma'ale Adumim road. No one was injured and no damage was caused. A rented car was gutted near the Shu'fat mosque north of Jerusalem.

Border Police Chief Notes Rise in Gunfire Attacks

TA2302193993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] In Khan Yunus, two border policemen were injured by stones. The stone throwers were dispersed with gunfire, which slightly wounded five.

The incidence of gunfire at border policemen in the territories rose dramatically last year, with 50 such incidents versus seven during the preceding year. Throughout last year, the Border Police sustained 725 casualties in operational activities, including five dead, compared to some 400 casualties in 1991. This data was released by Border Police Commander Yitzhaq Aharonovich. He noted that the number of recruits volunteering for the Border Police has increased, with an average of 10 volunteers for every job.

Sarid Denies Nuclear Waste Dumped in Dimona

TA2402110893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Environment Minister Yosi Sarid has said that reports that nuclear waste from overseas is dumped in Israel are unfounded. Minister Sarid told our correspondent Shula Schmerling that the radioactive waste dump site in Dimona will in future be under his personal supervision. Sarid will tour the site in two weeks, after he recovers from surgery.

Our correspondent points out that the nuclear waste dumped in Dimona comes from the Negev Nuclear Research Center nearby, the research center at Nahal Soreq, and other centers using radioactive materials. Sarid added that the public is entitled to and should know more about nuclear waste in spite of its military sensitivity. Ignorant people are more worried than people getting credible information, even if this information is not detailed for understandable reasons, Minister Sarid noted.

Fifth Arrow Missile Test Set for 'Near Future'

TA2402052193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] The fifth test of the Arrow antiballistic missile system is to take place in the very near future. Qol Yisra'el's military correspondent says the missile's ability to intercept a ground-to-air missile will be tested. The launching will take place off Israel's Mediterranean coast.

Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister Arrives in Amman

JN1902153593 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 19 Feb 93

[Text] Valentin Karabashev, Bulgarian deputy prime minister and trade minister, arrived in Amman today on a five-day visit to Jordan, during which he will meet with a number of Jordanian officials.

In a statement to the Jordan news agency, the guest minister said that he will convey a verbal message from the Bulgarian president to His Majesty King Husayn inviting him to visit Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian minister will discuss bilateral relations, particularly trade and means of promoting exchange.

Meets With King Husayn

JN2102170893 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn received at the Royal Hashemite Court today Valentin Karabashev, Bulgarian deputy prime minister and trade minister.

The bilateral relations of friendship, cooperation, and mutual respect, and efforts toward developing these relations in various fields were emphasized at the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Supply Muhammad al-Saqqaf and the Bulgarian ambassador in Amman.

Confers With Prime Minister

JN2002133693 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir received Valentin Karabashev, Bulgarian deputy prime minister and trade minister, in his office at the Prime Ministry today in the presence of Supply Minister Muhammad al-Saqqaf.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations, especially in the economic and trade fields, and means to develop these relations in light of the success of the work of the joint committee which resumed its meetings. Such cooperation serves the joint interests and copes with international changes. The talks also dealt with the bases of various aspects of trade cooperation.

Delegation Departs

JN2302191093 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1510 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Amman, 23 Feb (PETRA)—Valentin Karabashev, Bulgarian deputy prime minister and minister of trade, and his accompanying delegation have left Amman at the conclusion of a several-day visit to Jordan. During his visit, the Bulgarian official was received by His Majesty King Husayn, Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, and several senior Jordanian officials.

The Bulgarian minister also held economic talks with the ministers of finance, industry and trade, supply, and agriculture, as well as the director of the Jordanian Phosphates Mines Company and officials of the Amman Chambers of Trade and Industry on means of promoting and expanding bilateral trade.

The Bulgarian official was seen off at the airport by Supply Minister Muhammad al-Saqqaf and the Bulgarian ambassador in Amman.

Prime Minister Confers With Iraqi Education Minister

JN2002104693 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir received Iraqi Education Minister Hikmat al-Bazzaz in his office at the Prime Ministry today in the presence of Dhuqan al-Hindawi, deputy prime minister and minister of education.

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the results of al-Hindawi-al-Bazzaz's talks on education. The prime minister expressed interest in continuing this cooperation in the interest of the people of the two fraternal countries and reinforcing education for Arab students.

Paper Fears Circumvention of Resolutions 242, 338

JN2202120593 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 22 Feb 93 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Will Christopher Partition the Peace Process?"]

[Text] It seems that during his current tour, U.S. Secretary of State Christopher has succeded in diluting the Palestinian deportees' issue and separating it from the peace process. This is because some cordon states' readiness to resume negotiations with Israel before the deportees' issue is resolved has weakened the Arab stand that demands a solution to this issue before the peace process can be resumed.

His Highness Crown Prince Hasan has frequently warned against a separate settlement with this or that Arab state, which Israel may reach under U.S. supervision. It is evident from developments that Christopher has managed to partition the Arab stand as a prelude to partitioning the peace process.

Jordan, under His Majesty King Husayn, stressed the constants of the Arab stand based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, including Resolution 799 which calls for the deportees' immediate repatriation.

The Israeli-U.S. agreement has circumvented this resolution and it is about to be shelved. This is a serious precedent which may encourage Israel to disavow UN Resolutions 242 and 338 which are the basis of the peace process, the U.S. initiative, and the Madrid peace conference.

It is true that during his visit to Jordan the visiting U.S. secretary emphasized Resolutions 242 and 338, but the growing U.S. bias toward Israel during Clinton's term also arouses doubts and fears of a possible circumvention of these resolutions. Since the very beginning, Jordan has called for coordinating the stances of the Arab cordon states. However, some Arab parties' favorable response to Christopher's wishes is stronger than their commitment to Arab coordination.

Despite the talk about the means of confrontation and the firm language used by some officials in the cordon states, it seems that a separate settlement may soon be reached between Israel and one of these states. This will undermine Arab coordination, weaken the stands of other Arab parties, and may obstruct and foil the peace process.

Buwayz on Christopher Visit, Peace Talks

NC2402082593 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Telephone interview with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz in Beirut, by Fawzi al-Jundi in Cairo, carried within the "Dialogue From Afar" program; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Jundi] We want to welcome Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz to Voice of the Arabs.

[Buwayz] Welcome to you.

[Al-Jundi] Mr. Minister what did you find out from your meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and what is the significance of his visit to Lebanon?

[Buwayz] The U.S. secretary of state's visit to Lebanon carries special significance. It entrenches Lebanon's role in the Arab world. It also underlines the fact that peace and security have returned to Lebanon.

The topics of the visit focused on current events. Lebanon, as a country participating in the peace talks, needs to hear the views of the new U.S. Administration on the peace process. We wanted to hear the specific ideas of the new administration and its reassurances on implementing international resolutions. We believe that the U.S. role is pivotal. We believe the United States is capable of giving the necessary momentum to the peace talks and of bridging the gaps that might come during the talks. We heard Secretary Christopher's point of view. We sensed that the United States will continue in its commitment to push peace forward.

Lebanon, of course, is still dealing with the issue of Israeli withdrawal from its territories on the basis of Resolution 425. While we are also interested in the implementation of Resolution 242 in solidarity with its Arab brothers, the issue of the occupation of the south [of Lebanon] can only be handled through Resolution 425, nothing else. The U.S. side repeated its suppport, which appeared in previous letters of confirmation.

[Al-Jundi] Were there any specific ideas the U.S. Administration might propose when the coming round of peace talks is resumed?

[Buwayz] Of course, the centerpiece of this visit was the U.S. desire to give the peace process new momentum. The U.S. Administration's realization of the need to speed up this operation, putting an end to the stalling, indicates that the United States understands the growing feeling of frustration in the Middle East.

I got the clear impression that the new U.S. Administration intends to speed up events and place the peace process on its original track.

[Al-Jundi] Israel has stepped up its attacks on villages in southern Lebanon over the past few days, coinciding with Christopher's Middle East tour. How can these belligerent practices in the occupied territories, including the border strip in south Lebanon, be curbed and how gravely do these practices endanger the peace process in the region?

[Buwayz] Israel always resorts to this practice when dealing with a new situation. Israel believes that it can use these incidents instead of dealing with the real issues. Israel attempts to spark off the situation whenever the region is on the verge of a turning point so that the talks will revolve around the escalation instead of revolving around susbstantive issues.

[Al-Jundi] The issue of the Palestinian deportees seems to represent an insurmountable obstacle to the peace negotiations at the moment. Do you intend to take part in the ninth round of the peace negotiations even if this issue is not fully resolved?

[Buwayz] Lebanon is directly concerned with the deportees issue. Lebanon is also concerned that the UN Security Council resolutions may be misinterpreted or be partially implemented. Therefore, Lebanon's stand is clear: We want the full implementation of Resolution 799. It is essential that it is implemented within a short, reasonable period. The implementation of this resolution is enough to give the necessary momentum and credibility to the peace negotiations.

[Al-Jundi] Peace is essential if the Middle East nations want stability, but there are many obstacles to peace. Israel is responsbible for these obstacles. How can the Arabs prevent Israel from once again sabotaging the peace process?

[Buwayz] Compared with past situations, and for various reasons, the Arabs now enjoy a high-level of responsibility. The Arab regimes concerned with the peace issue have so far demonstrated a high degree of honesty and responsibility in dealing with such matters. Israel must realize that the current, historic circumstances may not be repeated. Israel must grab this opportunity because, currently, there are people open to the peace process, who have a sincere desire to resolve the region's problems and ensure the rights of all peoples.

Lebanon To Seek Reaffirmation of Bush Commitments

PM2302143693 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Feb 93 p 3

[Tariq Tarshishi report: "Buwayz Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "Lebanon Seeks Washington's Affirmation of Previous U.S. Commitments"]

[Excerpts] Beirut—Well-informed official sources in the Lebanese capital have said that it is now almost certain that Warren Christopher will visit Beirut in the coming 48 hours. They added that his talks with Lebanese officials could be held in Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi's house in Zahlah, to which Secretary Christopher can be transported by land via Damascus, or in the

temporary presidential office in al-Ramlah al-Bayda', or at Beirut international airport. [passage omitted]

Foreign and Expatriates Affairs Minister Attorney Faris Buwayz has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Lebanon will request from Christopher—if he visits Lebanon—that the new U.S. Administration adhere to the assurances and guarantees which the former administration offered to Lebanon before the Middle East peace conference was held.

He added: Lebanon will also urge the U.S. Administration to reactivate and boost the peace conference so that it can achieve the desired aims, and to abandon the role of an arbiter and play the role of a booster, as the role of an arbiter did not achieve the desired objective and enabled Israel to resort to evasion and to waste time in the previous rounds.

Lebanon is also expected to raise the deportees issue with the U.S. side. It will also urge pressure on Israel to return the deportees to their homes in accordance with Security Council Resolution 799. It will also demand the implementation of Resolution 425 in the south, like the international resolutions which have been implemented in other regions of the world.

Lebanon will stress to Washington that the implementation of this resolution does not need negotiation, and that it rejects the Israeli position, that is, linking its implementation to the conclusion of a peace treaty with Lebanon. Lebanon will also stress its refusal to conclude any separate treaty of this kind with Israel. It will also stress its commitment to the Arab position calling for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. [passage omitted]

The Lebanese side believes that diplomatic relations between the two countries require a serious U.S. impetus and an initiative from Washington, despite the Lebanese side's feeling that Lebanese political representation in Washington is not at the required level.

Washington is expected to inform Lebanon of its decision to appoint a new ambassador to the Lebanese capital to replace Ryan Crocker, who will move to another post. The new U.S. ambassador is expected to be one of the U.S. diplomatic team accredited to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Speaker Birri Returns From Damascus

NC2302191493 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Nabih Birri, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, returned from Damascus this afternoon following a three-day visit during which he met with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and other officials on current regional developments.

Fatah Releases 8 Abu-Nidal Supporters

NC2302131093 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Our security correspondent learned that the 'Arafat-led Fatah Movement today released eight members of the Fatah-Revolutionary Council [led by Sabri al-Banna, alias Abu-Nidal] in a gesture to mark the beginning of Ramadan. Two months ago, the 'Arafat-led Fatah released 18 men it had been holding in response to a plea by religious figures, but it is still holding 50 prisoners.

Hizballah Radio on Katyusha Attack, Shelling

NC2302080393 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Excerpt] AFP cites security sources in the south as saying that two Katyusha rockets were fired last night at a position of the Zionist army in the security strip. According to the sources, the two rockets landed at a position held by the occupation forces in the outskirts of Marwahin, one km away from the Lebanese-Zionist border. The sources do not mention casualties in the enemy ranks. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Resistance yesterday foiled a Zionist attempt to advance toward Sribbin and Wadi al-'Uyun. Resistance fighters clashed with the advancing unit and forced it to retreat, leaving its dead and wounded behind. The enemy prepared for the advance by shelling Kafra, Yatar, and al-'Uyun, from its position in Humayyid. When the attempt failed, the enemy renewed its shelling of Kafra and Yatar. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Resistance today shelled the enemy position in Humayyid. Zionist planes responded by shelling Kafra and Yatar.

Israeli Helicopters Raid Hizballah Position

NC2302172093 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1650 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Israeli artillery emplacements in the al-'Ayshiyah woods have been bombarding al-Wazzani area in Jabal al-Rayhan since 1710 today. At 1600 today, Israeli helicopters raided Hizballah position in the Nuskhah valley facing the village of Dayr Sirvan, hitting a position and killing two members.

Radio on U.S. 'Commitment' to Peace Efforts

JN2302161193 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: All observers agree that the Rabin government deliberately, provocatively, and flagrantly deported hundreds of Palestinians in an attempt to place additional obstacles in the path of the Middle East peace process, to prevent it from continuing on the basis of the terms of reference agreed upon for the Madrid conference and the bilateral Washington talks. The Rabin government has also chosen to step up the acts of violence and killings in the occupied Arab territories for the same purpose. The objective has been to embarrass the Palestinian negotiating team. This is because the Washington talks, which only marked time last year pending the outcome of U.S. presidential elections and the assumption of executive power by the new U.S. Administration, have exhibited to the entire world the Israelis' procrastination and their evasion of the requirements of peace. The Rabin government was unable to resort anew to the game of procrastination and maneuvering after the negotiations had continued for so long. Indeed, the only option it had left was to either comply with the Security Council resolutions or to confront the international community with a stand opposing peace. In light of this, Israel has chosen to create new obstacles, including the deportee issue, in hopes of provoking the Arab sides and pushing them to boycott the Washington talks—a development which would give Israel the opportunity to hold the Arabs responsible for the collapse of the peace process.

Hence, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has stressed Syria's concern for the peace process, in accordance with the agreed upon terms of reference, as well as the need to remove obstacles standing in its way, particularly the obstacle created by Israel's deportation of Palestinians. The achievement of peace in the Middle East requires Israeli compliance with the Security Council resolutions. As for Resolution 799, it provides for the immediate and safe repatriation of all deportees, and further stipulates that the Tel Aviv rulers should never resort to such harsh measures in the future, because such measures are in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and constitute a glaring violation of human rights and the principles of international law.

Security Council resolutions, such as Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, which were deemed the basis of the desired settlement, provide for the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, and also for respecting the Palestinian people's rights. It is only natural for Syria to welcome the Clinton administration's commitment to invigorate the peace process on the basis of the Security Council resolutions, and to play the role of a full partner in the talks, as expressed by U.S. Secretary of State Christopher. After all, Israel, through its current as well as previous government, has constantly maneuvered to neutralize the U.S. role, to keep Europe's role minimal, and to derail the Washington talks by proposing draft separate deals and phased settlements that conflict with the constant principles governing the peace process and the bases of the Madrid conference, which call for the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement.

It was extremely important to obtain a confirmation from the current U.S. Administration, stating that it will stick to the constant principles governing the peace process, as agreed upon, and to thwart Israel's attempts to drag Washington into positions and stands that conflict with the constants and bases of the peace process, and also with the good efforts expected to be made to activate the bilateral talks and end the stalemate that has characterized them.

U.S. Secretary of State Christopher has confirmed that the peace efforts will continue on the basis of the Security Council resolutions, that the talks he held with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad were important, and also that Syria has a key role, made manifestly clear when the Madrid conference convened, in the resumption of the peace process. This consecrates the convictions of the entire world community that the Arabs desire true peace, that Syria is extremely concerned for the establishment of peace in the Middle East, and that Israel alone, through its intransigence and procrastination, is thwarting the efforts to achieve a just settlement in the region.

The Washington talks continued for more than a year without achieving any tangible results. If these talks are indeed resumed, their success, as well as the success of the U.S. Administration, is contingent upon ending the vicious circle plaguing them and addressing the major issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict, foremost among them being Israeli withdrawal from the Golan [passage indistinct] on the Tel Aviv rulers to make them pursue the path of peace and meet its requirements without procrastination or maneuvering.

Peace is not achieved by statements. Rather, it is made possible by serious and tangible efforts to free the region from the whirlpool of violence and tension. The only way to achieve this is by respecting the Palestinian people's will and their right to self-determination and the return all occupied territories to their rightful owners. This is how we understand the U.S. Administration's commitment to the bases of the peace process. Indeed, this is the challenge facing the United States. As for its success in meeting this challenge, it is contingent upon obtaining Israel's compliance with international law and the Security Council resolutions, revoking policy based on the employment of double standards, repatriating the deportees, and putting the prospects of a just and comprehensive peace above Israel's aggressive ambitions and expansionist schemes.

Afghanistan

Government Troops Foil Hekmatyar Offensive

LD2302164693 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Golboddin [Hekmatyar] forces launched offensives against the positions of the forces of the army of the Islamic State from southerly and westerly directions last night and this morning. A responsible source at the Defense Ministry told the military correspondent of the Bakhtar Information Agency that Golboddin's rebellious forces launched a series of attacks on the positions of the forces of the army of the Islamic State from the south last night and this morning. They faced the resistance of the forces of the army of the Islamic State and their offensive failed. The source added: While the sound of explosions was heard from the south, the situation in the city of Kabul was calm and the people continued their daily work.

Iran Mediating To Halt Kabul Clashes

LD2302131993 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran is continuing its efforts to end the differences between hostile forces in Afghanistan and to restore lasting tranquility to that country. The correspondent of the Voice and Vision in Kabul reports that to resolve differences and free prisoners, the Islamic Repblic of Iran's officials in Kabul have been in contact with high-ranking officials in Afghanistan to assist in resolving differences and obtain the release of prisoners, and, with the mediation of our country's Embassy, thus far six Shiite civilians who were captured by the Supervisory Council and Sayyaf's [Islamic Union] party have been released. According to this report, Mr. Rabbani has also promised our country's ambassador that he will make serious efforts to release other civilian prisoners of recent fightings in west Kabul.

The recent attacks of the forces of the Supervisory Council and Sayyaf's party against the Afshar region in west Kabul have resulted in rendering homeless at least 6,000 inhabitants of that region who are all Hazara [ethnic group] Shiites. Winter cold, the unsettled situation in Kabul city, and shortages of food and fuel have created difficulties for these refugees who have taken refuge in mosques and other safe places.

Our correspondent in Kabul, quoting our country's ambassador, adds: The Islamic Republic of Iran's Embassy in Kabul has made substantial efforts to secure the maximum amount of food and medecine needed by the refugees. New consignments of humanitarian aid from the people and officials of our country will be reaching Kabul in the course of the next two weeks. But the real responsibility for bringing relief available to the refugees and reducing their sufferings rests with the government of Afghanistan. It should be noted that, in continuing to aid Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran today sent four cargo planes carrying food and medical aid to Afghanistan.

Pakistan Envoy, Rabbani Discuss Peace Efforts

BK2402071393 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Pakistan's Ambassador in Afghanistan Amir Usman called on Afghan President Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani in Kabul yesterday. During the meeting they assessed the latest situation in Kabul and discussed matters regarding changing the present lull in fighting into a permanent cease-fire. This was the second meeting of the Pakistan ambassador with Professor Rabbani in the last three days following Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif's instructions to assist in establishing peace in Afghanistan.

* Missiles Reportedly Deployed on Border

93P50061A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Feb 93 pp 1, 4

[Report by Ahmad Muwaffaq Zaydan in Peshawar and by 'Abdallah al-Hajj in Jeddah]

[Text] Informed Afghan sources have reported that Hezb-e Eslami security units yesterday moved from the interior of Afghanistan toward Pakistani territory to observe the Cherat base (for Pakistani special units) which is located 40 km from Peshawar. Between 65 and 150 U.S. commandos are at the base, having arrived last week within the framework of a plan that is aimed at getting rid of Hezb-e Eslami leader Golboddin Hekmatyar after he was accused of drug trafficking and smuggling.

These sources told AL-HAYAH that Pakistani intelligence has in the last 48 hours strengthened its security measures around the base. It arrested two Afghans on the charge of spying on the base and subsequently let them go.

These developments followed the Hezb-e Eslami's placement of (Organ) and Milan anti-aircraft missiles on the mountain peaks over which the commandos' helicopters are expected to pass in the border regions of Qandahar, Kohat, Nangarhar, and Paktia in Afghanistan.

Radio Moscow indicated that 150 commandos had arrived in Peshawar and that the goal of their operation was to kill or capture Hekmatyar.

Observers in Pakistan indicated that the U.S. ambassador in Islamabad, John Monjo, told the leader of the Pakistani Jamaat-i-Islami, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, in a recent meeting that "your intelligence is very strong" regarding the recent announcement of a news item on the arrival of the U.S. commandos. This news accompanied conflicting announcements by Army commander General Abdul Waheed and Foreign Minister Siddique Khan Kanju to such an extent as to make observers suspect the intentions of Pakistani officials.

Reliable Afghan sources reported to AL-HAYAH yesterday that the U.S. commandos intend to infiltrate Afghanistan in vehicles of the Western refugee organizations or of UN missions that are working there.

An unknown organization named Soldiers of Abu-Basir [Jund Abi-Basir] distributed a communique in Peshawar yesterday in which the organiation warned these organizations being utilized by the commandos for "terrorist activities" inside Afghanistan. The communique said: "We announce that any person who belongs to these refugee institutiions and provides help to the U.S. criminals to carry out their mission will be tried in a desert revolutionary court. Everyone knows what the sentence of this court will be."

This coincides with a report in which John Blackton, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, indicated that immediate discussions would be held with Pakistan and "if they succeed, $60 million will be offered in U.S. cultural aid to Pakistan." This will lead U.S. aid to Pakistan in 1994.

India

BJP Bid To Dissociate From Shiv Sena Viewed

BK2302132193 Delhi PATRIOT in English 10 Feb 93 p 3

[Text] In a significant move, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made a bid to disassociate itself from Shiv Sena by deciding not to invite the latter for the proposed "Rashtra Chetna [National Consciousness] Rally" in the capital on February 25.

Local MP and convener of the "arrangement committees" of the rally, Madan Lal Khurana, on Tuesday [9 February] categorically stated: "Shiv Sena is not invited to the rally," while responding to a query whether Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray would share the dais in the proposed rally.

"How can he come if he is not invited to the rally and let me make it very clear that it is purely a BJP show at national level," Mr. Khurana quipped. Shiv Sena had never been a constituent of either the BJP or the Sangh Parivar [BJP and allied groups] and anyone who would be participating in the rally would be a BJP worker or persons who support BJP policies, he added.

Mr. Khurana refused to speak on whether the BJP was trying to distance itself from Shiv Sena for the latter's role in Ayodhya on December 6 and its role in "hijacking" the Hindutva [Hindu revivalism] movement by inciting large-scale violence in Maharashtra.

He also disclosed that the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] leaders like Ashok Singhal and Vishnu Hari Dalmia were also not invited to participate in the rally.

About the disassociation from the Sena, BJP sources informed that the matter was of utmost concern after Sena chief Bal Thackeray's public statements that "Shiv Sena workers pulled down the tombs in Ayodhya on December 6 in a pre-planned manner."

It is not important whether the Sena workers demolished the Babri Masjid [mosque] or it was preplanned, the pertinent issue is that Bal Thackeray's statement was a clear attempt to hijack the Hindutva movement merely because they were a constituent of the Ayodhya movement, sources argued.

Another reason for BJP falling away from the Sena is reportedly the fear that Bal Thackeray, if invited, would try to gain political mileage by making fiery speeches at the rally.

Besides, sources said, the Sena sponsored riots in Bombay reflected an identification of "parochialism" in the "Hindutva movement," whereas the BJP's motive is to ride the Hindutva wave to sweep the electoral scene.

Even while the Delhi Administration and the Delhi Police had given no approval for the rally, the BJP's preparations for the rally were in full swing.

Mr. Khurana disclosed that he and Vijay Kumar Malhotra had met Minister of State for Internal Security Rajesh Pilot and Delhi Police Commissioner M.B. Kaushal on February 1.

He claimed that Mr. Pilot had given verbal "yes" to the rally on being assured that it would be peaceful. Surprisingly, the Delhi Police, which had not given "no objection" certificate for BJP's rally, already had a couple of meetings with the rally-organisers for the security arrangements on February 25.

According to Mr. Khurana, the organisers have had two meetings each with Additional Commissioner of Police S. Ramakrishnan and NDMC [New Delhi Municipal Corporation] administrator Ramesh Chandra so far for making arrangements for the rally. Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha's [BJP's Youth Wing] President Jagat Prakash Nadha, heading the security committee of the rally, had planned out the BJP's assistance in maintaining the security along with the Delhi Police.

It was all the more surprising because the intelligence sources had described the proposed "rally" as the seriousmost law and order situation, as six lakh people were supposed to turn out for the rally according to their estimate. They feel that the rally would pose a serious traffic problem.

Giving details about the rally, Mr. Khurana informed that the BJP had made "provisional booking" of the grounds opposite Rajghat and behind Red Fort, Kotla ground, Scout ground at Nizamuddin and a ground opposite Lady Shri Ram College. Besides, arrangements have been made for stay of the rallyists in satellite towns of Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh and Sonepat.

He said the BJP was expecting maximum participation from UP [Uttar Pradesh] and Delhi, from where 10 lakh

people (five lakh each) are likely to participate. One lakh each would participate from Bihar, MP [Madhya Pradesh], Rajasthan and South India. Mr. Khurana's expectation is even higher than 15 lakh people, while taking into account participation from Punjab (30,000), Haryana (50,000), Maharashtra (80,000) and North-Eastern states (20,000).

Mr. Khurana said a nine-member Arrangements Committee at the national level had been constituted for a proper coordination in making the rally a success. Mr. Khurana is the convener of the Arrangements Committee and other important members are Kedar Nath Sahni, O.P. Kohli (all from Delhi), C. Raj Gopal (Kerala), Kalraj Mishra (UP), Dharam Chand Chordia (Maharashtra) and Kailashpati Mishra (Bihar).

Besides, 12 committees have been constituted for making arrangements for the rally, like Security Committee, Publicity Printing Committee, Press and Media Committee, Transport Committee and Housing Committee.

For arranging food for the rallyists, 10 lakh packets (operation is nicknamed "Sita Rasoi" [Sita's kitchen] named after a building next to disputed structure in Ayodhya) of meals would be collected from two lakh people of Delhi and they would be kept at 50 different distribution centres.

Mr. Khurana stated that all the money for the rally would be collected from the people and no funds of the BJP and even of its Delhi unit would be used.

However, Delhi Pradesh [State] BJP's President O.P. Kohli gave a contradictory statement when he said the Delhi unit had to cough up some amount, as they were not expecting much collection from the public. "People generally like to contribute money once a year for the party and they had recently given the money for Samarpan Divas [Dedication Day] in honour of Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi," he said.

BJP Rally Banning, Reactions Reported

Chavan Rejects Reconsidering Ban

BK2302160093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] The government asserted in the Lok Sabha today that there is no question of reconsidering the ban on the proposed BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] rally in the capital on Thursday [25 February] in view of the prevailing situation in the country. The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, made it clear that any act of hooliganism will be put down with maximum power. Replying to the special discussion on the rule 193 on the issue, Mr. Chavan, said there are apprehensions about the peaceful conduct of the rally. He said the minorities fear that the sanctity of their places of worship may be violated by some elements during the rally. He recalled the incidents in Ayodhya on the 6th of December and pointed out that the solemn assurances given by senior BJP leaders were not kept and, therefore, the assurances that the rally will be peaceful cannot trusted. He charged that the rally is another device to stall the socioeconomic programs for the uplift of weaker sections and implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations [reserving jobs for weaker sections of society].

Not satisfied with the reply, the BJP members staged a walkout.

Minister on Action

BK2402031293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] The government has asserted that it will not allow the proposed BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] rally in the capital tomorrow and assured all steps to ensure normal life. Intervening in the special discussion in the Lok Sabha yesterday, the minister of state for internal security, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, warned that stern action will be taken against those who take law into their hands. He said that the BJP has lost credibility after the happenings on 6 December at Ayodhya and, therefore, its assurance that the rally will be peaceful cannot be relied upon.

Meanwhile, the Delhi police have made elaborate security arrangements to maintain law and order in the capital tomorrow. Talking to newsmen, the Delhi Police commissioner, Mr. (N.B. Khosha), said that the Mobile Reserve Police will take strict action against all those who violate prohibitory orders. He said the reserve forces will disperse all those who come to attend the rally, which is declared unlawful. Mr. (N.B. Khosha) said that schools, government offices, and markets will function normally tomorrow.

BJP To Defy Ban

BK2402062493 Hong Kong AFP in English 0505 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] New Delhi, Feb 24 (AFP)—India's main opposition party urged Wednesday its supporters to defy a government ban and stage a huge rally near parliament here on Thursday to demand early elections. The Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) called upon its members to reach "at any cost" five assembly points by 11:00 a.m. (0530 GMT) Thursday before proceeding to the heavily barricaded Boat Club grounds.

BJP vice president Sunder Singh Bhandari said at least half a million activists were expected to heed the call, despite the arrests of almost 200,000 supporters in an ongoing nationwide crackdown.

"Each one of us will try to reach the Boat Club," Bhandari told AFP. "If we are arrested, well..."

He said thousands of supporters had already reached New Delhi individually and in small groups from all over the country, and he expected a minimum of 500,000 people here Thursday. The BJP had originally estimated participation of one million.

The BJP, which is seeking to come to power on a religious platform, called for the rally to demand early elections to

parliament and the construction of a Hindu temple on the ruins of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. The BJP led an emotional campaign which led to the destruction on December 6 of the 16th-century Babri mosque, triggering bloody violence between Hindus and Moslems across India that left some 2,000 people dead.

"They (members) have been strictly told to push on," Bhandari said, denying any chance of violence. "If they are arrested, so be it. They have been told not to fight with the security forces."

Bhandari's comments came as the federal government, which cited possible violence in banning the rally and launching a sweeping crackdown on the BJP, earlier placed the Indian capital under a virtual and unprecedented siege. The Indian army was put on alert while tens of thousands of police and paramilitary personnel were deployed all over the city and at entrance points. The sprawling Boat Club grounds have been sealed off with barbed wire.

The New Delhi administration also announced strict curbs on the movement of people and vehicles in the city's downtown area until Friday.

Madan Lal Khurana, a BJP MP and a party strongman here, said supporters had been told to reach the five assembly points "at any cost individually and not in groups" to try marching to the Boat Club, which regularly hosts mass rallies. Two party leaders would lead the marchers from each point, he added.

Bhandari said police were arresting BJP activists all over the country.

"People have been pulled out of trains and buses. Our leaders and members have been taken away from houses and shops," he said.

The government has not said how many have been arrested, but reports said the nationwide crackdown which began six days ago was continuing, with thousands rounded up in almost all of India's 25 states.

"We are not able to understand why the government should be so scared," Bhandari said. "We have every right to air our views and solicit the support of the people on issues."

The government, citing the sensitive communal situation, has banned all rallies and demonstrations here for at least three months.

Government Ban Deplored

BK2402045793 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 12 Feb 93 p 8

[Editorial: "A Deplorable Decision"]

[Text] The Government's decision to ban the rally in Delhi planned by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] for February 25 is a reprehensible act of repression. The Government had neither the requisite decency nor the regard, expected of it, for democratic norms since it announced the ban without waiting for the Supreme Court's ruling on a petition relating to this very issue by two senior Congress leaders. As it happened, the court turned down their plea for a ban. The judges said that the petition was based merely on apprehensions. The ruling lays bare the true meaning of the ban which is that it is an act of political vendetta against the BJP.

The Union Home Minister, Mr S. B. Chavan has tried to make out that the decision was influenced mainly by what happened in Ayodhya on December 6. He says that the "total failure" of the BJP and its allies to control the situation at that time inspires little confidence that the proposed rally in Delhi would be peaceful. This assessment could have been readily acccpted if there were enough proof that the top leaders of the BJP had really connived in the acts of wanton violence on that occasion. But the Government has given no such proof. The reason obviously is that none exists. If, however, the Government's case is that the BJP leaders showed themselves to be inherently incapable of controlling the huge crowd at Ayodhya, then it has failed to take fully into account the exceptional nature of that gathering. It might have been wrong to organise that kar seva [voluntary temple construction work]. But the pertinent point is that it was not a normal party rally. The fact that in the event it took a tragic turn cannot, therefore, be reasonably cited as a justification of the present ban on the rally planned by the BJP in Delhi.

Nor has the Government cared to give due weight to another important consideration. That is the significance of the various pronouncements made by all the top leaders of the BJP since the demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya. These leave no room for doubt that firstly, they are genuinely unhappy about what happened and secondly, they have opted for a far more forward- looking policy free from the taint of crass communalism. After all, so serious an infringement of liberty as a ban on a political rally cannot be based simply on a police officer's view of the chances of an outbreak of violence but primarily on the Government's mature political assessment. The Narasimha Rao government studiously avoided such a sound approach obviously because it had made up its mind to make it difficult for the BJP to engage in normal political activity. It has chosen to fight its main opponent through coercive means rather than politically. Is the Government so sure that this will not boomerang?

BJP Members Stall Parliament Proceedings 24 Feb

BK2402092093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Both houses of Parliament witnessed uproarious scenes today as the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] members protested against the alleged police excesses in Delhi against party workers. The Lok Sabha was adjourned till 1400 after two adjournments earlier and the Rajya Sabha till 1600 after one adjournment.

As the Lok Sabha met this morning, the BJP members trooped into the well of the house amidst noisy scenes raising slogans. The speaker adjourned the house for half an hour and again till noon when the same pattern was repeated by the slogan-shouting BJP members. The situation was in no way better when the house met again at noon and the house was adjourned till 1400.

The Rajya Sabha also witnessed a similar scene with BJP members rushing into the well of the house shouting slogans against the alleged excesses of police. The chairman of the house, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, tried to pacify the members saying that the issue should be raised in a proper manner during the zero hour. When the BJP members continued with their protest, the chairman permitted one of them to speak on the subject. The Congress-I members objected to this. When the BJP members rose to speak, the leader of the house, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, said that either the question hour should be suspended or proceeded with. The BJP members again rushed to the well and started raising slogans. The chairman then adjourned the house till 1200 noon. When the house met again at noon, the vice chairman allowed Mr. Pramod Mahajan of BJP to speak. Mr. Mahajan repeated his allegations of police excesses on the party workers. He wanted a statement from the government. When the vice chairman called Mr. Mohammad Salim, CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist], to speak on the listed business of the house, the BJP members did not allow him to speak and repeated their performance of rushing to the well of the house raising slogans. At this stage, the vice chairman, Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan, who was in the chairman, said that as the members do not want the house to function, she adjourned the house till 1600.

The Bharatiya Janata Party has announced that it will boycott the rest of the day's proceedings in both houses of Parliament in protest and anguish over, what they allege as, police atrocities on the party workers coming to attend tomorrow's proposed rally at he Boat Club in New Delhi. Speaking to newsmen in Parliament House a shortwhile ago, the party secretary, Mr. Madanlal Khurana, said that the decision was taken at a meeting of the parliamentary party this morning presided over by Mr. L.K. Advani.

White Paper on Ayodhya Mosque Demolition

BK2402092693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] The white paper on Ayodhya was laid by the union home minister in the Rajya Sabha today. The 122-page document has held the Kalyan Singh government responsible for the demolition of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid [disputed temple-mosque] structure in Ayodhya on the 6th of December. It says the demolition was not due to the failure of the system, but the affidavits given to the court and assurances given to the parliament to the contrary became meaningless when an elected government could not discharge its duties in a matter of great sensitiveness and magnitude.

Giving a blow-by-blow account of the incident leading to the demolition on the 6th of December, the white paper says the sequence of events on the day shows that the Center kept up constant pressure on the Kalyan Singh government to use the central forces for the protection of the structure. The state government had at no stage explicitly stated that it will not make use of these forces. It says that on more than one occasion during the day the forces were actually requisitioned but their movement was delayed due to nonavailability of magistrates. Even when eventually a magistrate accompanied a force comprising a few companies, he sent the forces back after going part of the way. Thus, the paper says, the state government kept up a pretense without actually using the central forces effectively. The paper says even when the criminal activity of demolishing the structure was going on, the local authorities and the police appeared standing as mute spectators, ostensibly under the instructions of the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh [UP]. It says this dismal picture of inaction and the state government's dereliction of duty was because of orders of the UP chief minister not to use force. The paper says even the small contingent of central reserve police was rendered inactive and powerless by express direction given to them by the local magistrate and higher state government authorities. It says a worse example of irresponsibility and abdication of power by those who had taken oath to defend the Constitution and uphold the rule of law cannot be imagined. The white paper says during the entire period on the 6th of December, the union home secretary was continuously in touch with the prime minister. In view of the developments, a meeting of the union cabinet was called at 1800 which resolved to bring the UP state under president's rule and dissolve the state assembly.

Kashmir Leaders Urge Democratic Process

BK2402080793 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, leaders of various political parties have emphasized the need for revival of the democratic process in the state. They were speaking at the state leaders conference in Jammu yesterday. The leaders stated that the conference was a major step toward starting the political process and hoped that it will make a positive contribution in restoring peace in the state. The former chief minister and the National Conference leader, Mr. Farooq Abdullah, presided over the conference. Over 165 leaders are participating in the two-day conference.

Paper Notes Congress-I Intraparty Rift

BK2302145793 Delhi PATRIOT in English 14 Feb 93 p 1

[Text] The Congress party high command has a daunting task ahead in sorting out the on-going political crisis in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu amid reports that some of the senior party leaders are in fact fuelling the crisis, reports ANI [ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL].

The party's fire-fighting efforts in Madras however suffered a setback when an AICC [All India Congress Committee] team consisting Motilal Vora and Thangabalu returned to Capital without meeting Jayalalitha. Though the party spokesman, V.N. Gadgil maintained that alliance with Jaya will continue, a number of party MP's confessed to ANI that it is increasingly becoming a distinct possibility.

Rumours were rife that Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh met Jayalalitha en route to Trivandrum. Singh had a night-halt at Madras on Friday [12 February] and informed sources said both the leaders discussed matters of 'mutual interests.'

It is believed that Singh is making no bones about his alleged differences with Rao and is keen to patronise all those who have fallen out with Rao which includes Jayalalitha.

However, AICC functionaries blamed the high command too for taking the Congress-AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] alliance too lightly. They point out that Rao should have deputed more senior leaders for Madras—leaders who understand the intricacies of southern politics and command respect from party rank and file.

While Arjun Singh has been blamed for "engineering treachery" in Madras, sources blame Sharad Pawar for precipitating the crisis in Maharashtra. Political observers point out that it is an open fact that Sharad Pawar has wanted Naik's head for quite some time and following the Bombay riots, his camp has actively encouraged dissident activities. Sources claimed that Sharad Pawar mobilized the support of Ghulam Nabi Azad, C.K. Jaffer Sharif, N.K.P. Salve and others against Naik.

The flash point, they said, however has reached when the Congress legislative party on Sunday openly revolted against Naik's leadership.

Sources said while Naik is taking shelter behind 'loyalty towards Rao,' his detractors are planning to punish him on the same count. It is believed that Sharad Pawar has secured the support of Arjun Singh against Naik over his attempts to isolate Singh during the crucial CWC [Congress Working Committee] meeting.

AICC general secretary in charge of both Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu Janardhan Poojari is bedridden and in his absence V.C. Shukla and Jitendra Prasad have reportedly been asked to sort out matters.

Unlike Madras, the appointment of a high profile AICC observer team for Bombay, sources said, expresses the high command's desire to clip Sharad Pawar's wings. As Pawar has rushed his henchman Suresh Kalmadi to Bombay, Rao has sent N.D. Tiwari, H.K.L. Bhagat and G.K. Moopanar to handle the situation in such a way so that the Defence Minister does not emerge victorious in his state.

ANI learnt that AICC general secretary Sushil Kumar Shinde is emerging as a consensus candidate in place of Naik. Shinde is a non controversial person belonging to the SC/ST [Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe] category and more importantly does not belong to the Pawar camp.

With the Union budget round the corner, the on-going crisis, sources said, will have far reaching consequences. While a section of Congressmen have already successfully scuttled [Janata Dal-A leader] Ajit Singh's entry in the ruling party, there are serious doubts over the Rao Government's survival over the budget. With the BJP up in arms and the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]-Janata Dal refusing to bail out Rao and his colleagues at the Centre, the Government's future appears bleak.

Settlement To Resolve Bodo Problem Signed

BK2002130493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] The Assam government, the center, and the Bodoland Movement leaders today a signed a memorandum of settlement at Guwahati to put an end to the Bodo problem. Under the settlement, a 40-member Bodoland Autonomous Council will be set up for socioeconomic and cultural development for the Bodo people. About 2,000 villages having contiguity and about 25 tea gardens located in the north bank of the Brahmaputra will come under the governance of the new Council. The settlement was signed by the minister of state for home, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, on behalf of the center while the Assam chief minister, Mr. Hiteshwar Saikia, signed for the state government. Mr. S.P. Basumatiari, president of the All Bodo Students Union initialed it on behalf of the Bodo movement.

Commentary Hails Settlement

BK2102040893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Commentary by A.J. Philip of THE HINDUSTAN TIMES: "Bodoland Settlement"]

[Text] The resolution of the vexed Bodoland issue marks a turning point in the history of Assam. With the memorandum of settlement signed yesterday by the representatives of the government and the Bodoland agitationists, peace has at last returned to Bodo inhabited areas of the state. The agreement is the result of the realistic approach adopted by the union minister of state for home, Mr. Rajesh Pilot; the Assam chief minister, Mr. Hiteshwar Saikia; and the leaders of the All Bodo Students Union, ABSU; and the Bodo People's Action Committee, BPAC.

Under the agreement, an autonomous council with wide legal and administrative powers would be set up to speed up the development of the area. It may be recalled that the Experts Committee, which had studied the Bodoland issue, had also recommended setting up of an autonomous council. The council will have 35 elected and five nominated members. Altogether 38 subjects, which are at present within the domain of the state government, would

be transferred to the council. This will ensure that the council is able to give purposeful direction to the development of the area.

The agreement shows that the two sides have shown considerable flexibility in their eagerness to end the deadlock. The agreement also provides for surrender of arms and ammunition by the ABSU-BPAC cadres and their early rehabilitation. All in all the agreement marks the triumph of reason and understanding. The success of the agreement depends on how the parties concerned abide by it. It casts a heavy responsibility on the protagonists of Bodoland to use the autonomy for faster socioeconomic development of the area. There is a fringe group within the two organizations which may not be satisfied with the outcome. The ABSU-BPAC leaders should convince them that their demand for full statehood is flawed and is not feasible. The agreement is a recognition of this reality.

Army Chief to UK To Finalize Gun, Jet Deals

BK2302124793 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 14 Feb 93 p 19

[Text] NEW DELHI, Feb. 13 (PTI) Army chief Gen. S.F. Rodrigues today left on a five day official visit to the UK to explore avenues of wider cooperation with the British Army as defence tie-ups to collaborate in manufacture of vital armaments.

Gen. Rodrigues, who is heading a high level defence team, is visiting England at the invitation of his British counterpart.

The delegation would finalise a deal with the British Vickers gun manufacturers for purchase and manufacture of AS-90, self-propelled 155-mm guns and a range of other specialised items.

It may be recalled that the Army's crack strike formations are acutely short of self-propelled guns as India did not acquire the Bofors 155 mm self-propelled guns for use by the armoured corps following the kickbacks scandal.

The Rs [rupees] 1,400 crore contract with Messers AB-Bofors Limited provided for India purchasing 400 155 mm guns and subsequently purchasing 200 self-propelled guns and acquiring technology to manufacture them in India.

Defence sources said British Premier John Major, during his visit here, had offered long term credit on easy terms for purchase and technology transfer for both Vickers AS-90 self-propelled guns, as well as, the Hawk advanced trainer jet.

Sources said the Indian Army's immediate requirements are for 400 self-propelled guns which might be brought off the shelf and the rest assembled in India.

The Vickers GBT 155 mm guns has obviously been picked up by defence experts keeping in view the standardised 155 mm ammunition which is common to both the Bofors 155 mm guns and Vickers self- propelled guns.

The Americans had also offered, on easy credit, the US M109 A5 version which has been acquired by the Pakistan Army.

But, the common ammunition of Bofors and Vickers guns obviously tilted the balance in favour of the Vickers AS-90 self-propelled guns.

During his visit, the Army chief and his delegation would visit various British Army establishments and meet top ranking defence officials, a Defence Ministry release said.

Major Deal Expected

BK2402050193 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 12 Feb 93 p 9

[By Pravin Sawhney]

[Text] New Delhi—In what promises to be the biggest defence deal with United Kingdom in recent times, the Government of India appears set to sign a nearly Rs 2,500 crore contract with the British Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Limited (VSEL) for the purchase of AS90 self-propelled (SP) gun turret for the Army.

The deal was apparently clinched by British Prime Minister John Major during his recent visit to New Delhi, a fortnight ago. The payments, it is understood, are likely to be spread over minimum five years.

The recently conducted firing, stability and mobility trials on the hybridised AS90 SP gun system, consisting of VSEL GBT 155 155mm gun turret mounted on the the indigenous Vijayanta tank chassis powered by the T-72 tank engine, are reported to have been successful. The hybridised SP gun is expected to enter service by end this year, according to authoritative sources.

The cost of each AS90 gun turret is Rs 6.3 crore, and the Army's requirement is of about 430 guns for the two strike corps and reserves. "At best, half the gun turrets may be procured off-the- shelf, and the assembly kits for the remaining are likely to be contracted," observed a [word indistinct] officer.

The ten-day long visit of Army chief Gen S. F. Rodrigues to UK beginning February 13, therefore, assumes significance, as he is expected to discuss the gun trial results under sub-continental conditions with VSEL officials. The other important issue likely to figure during the chief's stay relates to the shortage of standardised 155mm calibre ammunition, which is common to the Bofors guns (410 guns are with the army) and the UK AS90 gun.

The 155mm ordnance and ammunition under the quadrilateral ballistic agreement between UK, USA, Germany and Italy is a standardised lot. With the original AB Bofors of Sweden (manufacturers of Bofors gun) having closed down, and India still to indigenise the 155mm ammunition, this ammunition has to be sought from the western nations consortium.

The selection of this hybridised gun puts to rest a ten year search for a self-propelled gun. While trials of various equipment were conducted during this period, the most recent and attractive offer was the US M109 gun negotiations, which fell through mainly for political reasons. While Pakistan has US M109 A2 version, India was offered M109 A5 version by Washington initially during Gen S. F. Rodrigues visit to US in August 1991.

The ideal combination, however, which did not materialise for unknown reasons was the French package in the early eighties of GCI (SP) for armoured formations and Tract 55 towed version for the mountains. This combination having similar ordnance, ammunition and manufactured by the same company would have well suited the army"s requirements. The former Soviet Union had offered their package of 2S5 152 (SP) and 152 mm light towed howitzer.

The only SP guns presently with the army are about 20 "Catapults", which are the Soviet 130 mm field gun M-46 mounted on Vijayanta chassis and have been unsuccessful, being defect prone. The first attempt to graduate to the 155 calibre,(as the rate of fire and splinter capability of modern 155mm shell and its blast effect are far better than the existing small calibre guns) was the acquisition of 410 Swedish FH-77B (Bofors) towed gun, which lacks mobility and has many problems with its auxillary power unit (APU). The biggest being its noise, which is a give away even at 2,000 meters at night.

Considering that trials of the same VSEL GBT 155155mm gun turret on a Vijayanta tank chassis were first unsuccessfully conducted in the country in 1990, sources are still skeptical about the veracity of the recent trial results.

Besides the fact that now a 760 horse power T-72 engine has replaced the 560 horse power Vijayanta engine to power the base vehicle, details of how, at least, three problems have been overcome, is not understood. First, the weight distribution of the AS90 turret on stretched Vijayanta chassis is likely to pose mobility problems. Similar problems were faced when French GCT (SP) turret was attempted to be hybridised on the Vijayanta hull, eight years ago.

Second, how the transmission system of the up-powered Vijayanta tank with T-72 engine has been balanced for the given power to weight ratio is unclear.

And given the fact that a continuous spares supply for Vijayanta hull will be required, the Vijayanta production line which closed in 1987 may need to be reopened.

The officials, however, claim that through this hybrid gun system, a critical gap is being sought to be plugged at low cost without compromising combat capability. The real issue is whether given the margin savings in hybridisation of AS90 gun system and the accompanying problems, the project is worthwhile," observed an officer.

Naval Exercise With Singapore Held 10-13 Feb

BK2302055693 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 11 Feb 93 p 9

[Text] New Delhi—The Indian Navy commenced its first ever four-day joint naval exercise with the Royal Singapore Navy off Port Blair on Wednesday.

Earlier, two ships of the Navy had conducted similiar two-days exercises with ships of the Sultanate of Oman off Muscat on January 13, according to the naval headquarters spokesman.

Kukri class corvettes INS [Indian Navy Ship] Kirpan and Petya-II class INS Anjadip will undertake various sea manoeuvres under the command of Captain S. Swaminathan with the Singapore Navy victory class missile corvettes Valour and fast attack craft missile Sea Lion commanded by Lt Col Simon Oug. These will include weapon firings, screening manoeuvres and replenishments at sea.

Commissioned into the Royal Singapore Navy in 1990, Valour fires surface-to-surface Harpoon missiles and surface-to-air Rafael Barak-I. It is fitted with one OTO Melara three inch guns and has a human complement of 49, including eight officers on board.

Commissioned in 1972, Sea Lion is an older vessel. It can also fire Harpoon missiles and has 57mm and 40mm Bofors guns. It has a crew of 36, including six officers.

Kirpan, with a crew of 79 (including 10 officers), fires SSM SS- N-2C and SAM SA-N-5 Grail missiles and has the Soviet AK 176 threein gun and a Chetak helicopter on board. Anjadip, with a human complement of 98, is similar to INS Andamans, which had sunk in the Bay of Bengal in 1990.

In a joint exercise with the Sultanate of Oman, the modern Godavari class INS Ganga, which has on board two Sea King helicopters, and INS Kukri under the command of Rear-Admiral Madhvinder Singh, flag officer commanding Western Fleet and Oman navy Vosper corvettes and a fast attack craft-missile vessel did manoeuvres at sea.

The significance of these low level tactical joint exercises lies in the fact that it provides opportunities for understanding each other's communication drills at sea and fosters friendly relations through crew professional and social interaction:

These exercises should to be viewed in the larger context of greater interaction between the growing Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Phillipines and Brunei), United States and Indian navies with the obvious aim of keeping the South China Sea and Strait of Malacca sea-lanes (through which nearly 4,500 merchant ships pass each month) secure.

While India recently signed a defence-related memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Malaysia, the latter signed a similar MoU with Brunei. Both Malaysia and Brunei are negotiating similar agreements with the US.

And Singapore has already permitted greater access of its naval facilities to US warships.

Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand are also bound by a defence pact. "The growing cooperative naval interaction between the countries of the region with US encouragement is poised to strengthen further," according to an officer.

Paper Welcomes Naval Exercise

BK2402061393 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 13 Feb 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Useful Naval Exercise"]

[Text] The commencement of naval exercises between the Indian and Singapore navies is a welcome development. To last four days, the exercises off the Andanans coast are ostensibly to familiarise officers and men of the two navies with communication drills. In all terrains of combat, the most crucial factor is always the efficiency of communications. Effectiveness of commands is dependent on the ability to communicate competently. It is vital, therefore, that the first-ever practice at sea between the Indian Navy and the Singapore Navy focusses on understandng each other's communication skills. Joint exercises involving ships from two very different fleets is an ambitious endeavour in any circumstances, the effort is, therefore, most laudable.

Preceded by a similar exchange with Oman, India is now firmly on course to stablishing some modicum of regularity in its naval interchanges with the neighbours. This is a significant departure from the previous practice of shielding the Indian armed forces from those of other countries. In the cold war era, the stated reason was always 'national security'. Now, however, the entire of gamut of 'security' is undergoing the most profound of changes. In today's world, shyness is no more a virtue, and it is only logical that such changes have their impact on the armed forces as well. A beginning was made with increased Indo-US exchanges, and the process is being taken forward in a reasonable direction. Encounters of this kind and exercises will help in alleviating fears repeatedly expressed that India is heading towards securing a regional power role for itself. Exercises in particular reveal the psychological make-up of soldiers. Security and national defence cannot be separated from cooperation with others. No country in the world can hope to protect its national interests without the aid of other states. Costs, and an increasingly complex international scenario requires each to cooperate with the other. And in that sense, the Indian Navy is pioneering the cause of cooperation, by conducting exchanges with navies of the neighbourhood.

India and Singapore have one common interest which overrides all other grounds. They are both overwhelmingly dependent on sea-borne trade, and specifically so on the Strait of Malacca. The volume of trade through this narrow strait is simply enormous, and increasing continuously. Also on the rise is the threat of pirates in this area. There have been numerous incidents reported in the recent past, and if the exercises currently underway off Port Blair are anything to go by, at least India and Singapore are paying greater attention to this problem. The class of ships involved in the exercises suggests that anti-piracy manoeuvres could well be on offer in future. This is heartening, for India must be seen as a help not a bully.

Minister Visits SRV, Thailand 18-21 Feb

BK2402104093 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 0922 GMT 24 Feb 93

["Press Release" on the visit of the minister of state for external affairs, Salman Khurshid, to Vietnam and Thailand]

[Text] Salman Khurshid, minister of state [MOS] for external affairs, paid an official visit to Vietnam from 18 to 21 February 1993. During visit, minister met top leadership of Vietnam, including prime minister in Hanoi. Vietnam has volunteered to give full backing to India's permanent membership of Security Council. During banquet speeches Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nugyen Manh Cam called for greater democratisation of UN structure.

Addressing a press conference in Ho Chi Minh City, minister announced that India and Vietnam will shortly be signing an air agreement to facilitate direct flights by national carriers between two countries and avoidance of double taxation treaty. Minister Salman Khurshid announced that Ho Chi Minh City and Bangalore will establish a sister-city relationship. Minister also announced that a high-level Indian trade delegation consisting of leading industrialists, senior government officials, bank executives and trading organisations will visit Vietnam very soon followed by a high-power delegation from Vietnam to India, to enter into concrete negotiations on crucial areas of development like infrastructure, transportation and tourism. Minister conveyed thanks to Vietnam for understanding shown by them of events in Ayodhya, as conveyed to Indian prime minister through a letter by his Vietnamese counterpart.

In discussions with chairman of Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee (equal to chief minister of province), both sides agreed to cooperate in transportation and tourism sectors. In tourism, India agreed to provide son et lumiere at world famous Cu Chi Tunnels near Ho Chi Minh City. It was also agreed that India and Vietnam would cooperate in strengthening public transportation system in Ho Chi Minh City by providing Indian buses. Setting up of export processing zones and joint development of computer software are other areas where both sides agreed to take immediate action.

Visit of MOS Salman Khurshid to Thailand: Hon'ble Minister of State Salman Khurshid called on Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, H.E. Sqn Ldr. [Squadron Leader] Prasong Sunsiri today (Feb. 22) afternoon. Later, he also met Thai deputy minister of foreign affairs, Dr Surin Phitsuwan. Ambassador A.N. Ram accompanied hon'ble Minister of State Salman Khurshid. Matters of mutual interest were discussed during both meetings. Thai

foreign minister and deputy foreign minister agreed with hon'ble MOS that Indo-Thai links should be further intensified in all domains. Priority would be accorded to further development of Indo-Thai economic and commercial linkages. Thai Foreign Minister Sqn. Ldr. Prasong Sunsiri indicated that he would like to visit India in near future to co-chair 2nd meeting of Indo-Thai joint commission.

Earlier, yesterday evening, MOS addressed a gathering of Indo- Thai joint ventures forum and leaders of Indian community. He asked them to invest in India, and to share technical expertise gained by them abroad, with Indian entrepreneurs. He assured them of irreversibility of our economic reforms and exhorted them to be active partners in India's economic development and growth.

New Trade Agreement Signed With Romania

BK2402071193 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1615 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] India and Romania are to conduct bilateral trade in hard currency from April next. This follows a new trade and economic cooperation agreement signed in New Delhi today by the commerce minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherji, and his Romanian counterpart, Mr. Constantin Teculescu. Both sides agreed to step up cooperation in a wide-range of fields, including industry, transport, agriculture and tourism. The two countries also decided to consider the establishment of a joint venture bank in Romania. A joint venture is also proposed for taking up trading activities like counter-trade [as heard] and off-shore trading.

Mr. Teculescu also called on the prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, this evening. Mr. Teculescu briefed the prime minister on the changes taking place in the Romanian economy. Mr. Narasimha Rao said that with the new trade agreement with Romania, this was the first step toward reestablishing trade relations between the two countries.

France To Assist Modernization of Transport System

BK2002082293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] France finds the investment climate in India excellent and is ready to give a new boost to promote bilateral economic activities. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi today after his meetings with senior Indian ministers and business leaders, the French minister for foreign trade, Mr. Bruno Durieux, said the French companies are ready to join in the new economic activities in India through capital participation, technology transfer, and joint venture production tie-ups. Mr. Durieux said the recent political disturbances in India in the wake of the Ayodhya incident have not affected the process of economic reforms, investment climate, and industry modernization.

This view is also shared by the high-level French business delegation that is currently in India to attend the 10th Indian Engineering Trade Fair.

The French minister said his country will assist India in the modernization of transport system and repairing the damages to the environment.

Accord on Diversification of Trade With Italy

BK2102034693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] India and Italy have agreed to diversify trade and to improve the market accessibility. It was decided in the Indo-Italian joint committee for economic cooperation meeting which concluded in New Delhi yesterday. The Italian side expressed its satisfaction over the investment prospects created by the liberalization program. The minutes were signed by the commerce minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, and the Italian minister of foreign trade, Mr. Claudio Vitalone.

Pre-Budget Economic Survey Presented

BK2302093093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] The economic survey for 1992-1993 presented to Parliament today says that the reforms launched by the government have begun to payoff and the economy is much stronger now. It says there has been decisive progress in bringing down the inflation to 6.9 percent at the end of last month from 13.6 percent a year ago.

About the balance of payments position, the survey says it has stabilized due to the policy initiatives taken in 1991-1992 and the GDP [gross domestic product] growth is expected to exceed four percent this year.

The survey was presented in the Lok Sabha by the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, and and by the minister of state for finance, Mr. Abrar Ahmed, in the Rajya Sabha. It points out a big rise in the agriculture output with the kharif [autumn] foodgrain harvests likely to show a rise of 8 percent. The prospects of coarse grains crop, kharif oil seeds and mustered are bright, but the sugarcane crop is likely to be slightly lower. The edible oil supplies are expected to be comfortable.

The survey points out that the industrial sector continued to suffer from recessionary conditions through 1992-93 despite [word indistinct] evidence that the industrial growth is accelerating.

On poverty alleviation and human resource development, the survey says that funds for programs to service these needs have come down in recent years because of severe pressure on budgetary resources. It says the restoration of fiscal balance will enable the government to devote larger resources to these programs.

On exports, the survey says the performance is far better this year than during last year. The average growth rate in the April to December period last year was adversely affected by decline in exports of 12.5 percent because of the disturbed conditions in the country in December.

The survey suggests that the recommendations made by the Dr. Raja Chelliah Committee [on tax reforms] deserve full consideration keeping in view the already declared policy of moderate tax rate. It says once the tax rates are brought down, better compliance can be expected and tax revenues will be more responsive to the growth of the economy. It says although considerable fiscal correction has been achieved bringing down the fiscal deficit from 8.4 to 5 percent, the process must continue.

Drop in 1993 Export Performance Expected

BK2402051993 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 12 Feb 93 p 13

[Text] The country's export performance in the current financial year is expected to fall short of the target by over 50 percent. The export growth is, however, expected to accelerate in 1993-94.

Mr. A. V. Ganesan, Commerce Secretary, is expecting the current financial year to close with six percent growth in exports in dollar terms over 1991-92, against a target of 12.8 percent.

Mr. Ganesan told reporters here on Thursday that the export growth in 1993-94 was expected to enter the double digit figure. He said that the Planning Commission's target for 13.6 percent annual increase in exports in volume terms during the Eighth Plan implied 16 percent annual growth in dollar terms.

He pointed out that the import growth during the Eighth Plan might exceed the Planning Commission's assumed increase of 8.4 percent per annum. The increase might be 10 percent. The industry, in fact, has said that the imports should grow at 12 percent a year for faster growth of the economy. He said that Planninng Commission's estimate was that one per cent growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) resulted in 1.5 growth, in imports.

The Commerce Secretary said that the exports to Russia would be back on the rails in 1993 following the settlement of various issues relating to trade, rupee-rouble rate and repayment of debt. The country could export goods and services worth $2 billion per year to Russia. This potential could be tapped within two years. He said that there would be no trade protocol with Russia in 1993 and the bilateral trade would be conducted in convertible currencies within the framework of five-year bilateral economic cooperation agreement signed in 1991. There was a provision for counter-trade and barter arrangements.

Answering a question on export promotion and incentives, he said that the reduction in the interest rates on export credit would be a "gradual process". He pointed out that Reserve Bank Governer had already indicated that interest rates were likely to be reduced in the coming months. He said that the country should subsidise exports carefully. Denying the charge that the withdrawal of interest subsidy and cash compensatory support had substantially reduced the export incentives. he said that the anti-export bias had been reversed, if not eliminated. He claimed that partial convertibility of rupee was working in favour of exporters.

Referring to Chelliah Committee's recommendation for steep cut in import duties over the next five years, he said that it was very important to rationalise the import tariff. "We need to come out of shelter syndrome".

Despite repeated questioning he declined to indicate whether the Commerce Ministry would accept the Committee's recommendations on anti-dumping regulations and procedures. He claimed that he had not fully read the relevant recommendations.

Answering a spate of questions on DDT [Dunkel Doctrine on Trade] at press conference here on Thursday, Mr. A.V. Ganesan said that the trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) provisions of DDT constituted a Paris Convention plus approach. It required a "sea change" in the Indian Patents Act. The issue of seeking AG's [Attorney General] opinion on Paris Convention was, thus, "no longer relevant".

Mr. Ganesan, however, did not reveal whether Attorney General gave any opinion. He explained that AG's views were sought a few years ago by the Industry Ministry to know whether the Indian Patent Act would require any amendments in case India signed the Paris Convention. He said the views were sought much bofore the release of DDT.

It may be recalled that in January 1992, the Industry Ministry took shelter under AG's pending opinion when the Chief of World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) discussed the issue with Prof. P. J. Kurien, the then Minister of State for Industry.

Mr. Ganesan said that the Commerce Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee would seek the opinion of opposition parties on DDT. The separate discussions with the leaders of each opposition party would be organised over a four-day period

Mr. Ganesan felt that if the new United States adminstration did not give importance to early completion of GATT's Uruguay round of talks on international trade, then it might take about one year to complete the discussions.

Iran

Commentary Says U.S. Mideast Mission Will Fail

LD2302203093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] The diplomacy of the Clinton administration in the Middle East, from the view point of

certain political observers, is based on finding two solutions in order to put an end to the stalemate in the [Arab-Israeli peace] talks.

First finding and presenting solutions to terminate the problem of the exiled Palestinians and to persuade the Arabs to separate the peace talks from the deportee's issue. [sentence as received]

This was the significant subject which was pursued by the new rulers at the White House since the surfacing of this crisis.

However in consideration of the stalemate faced by the parties and in fact based on the expectations which the Arabs have concerning the enforcement of the Security Council resolutions on restoration of their lands, it appears that the U.S. secretary of state by presenting certain proposals on the subject is trying to once again bring together the Arab delegations in Washington.

However, it is obvious that the Democrats do not intend to bring any pressure on the Zionist regime in this connection.

In the opinion of the political experts with due regard to the U.S. policy and the type of its ties with Tel Aviv, it appears remote that the Zionist regime will be put under pressure in any manner.

Even Warren Christopher in his meeting with the Egyptian officials has stressed that the White House will lose its credibility in case of pressuring the Zionist regime.

Irrespective of all these efforts and political moves by the United States which are being made to put the Palestine cause and the tragic event on deportation of 400 Palestinians into oblivion, the Palestinian deportees while staying in the freezing heights of Lebanon, still convey their message to the world public opinion.

It declares their opposition to any sort of compromise with the Zionist regime within the framework of the so called peace talks and their call for collective return home.

As a matter of fact this message of the deportees and their capacity as the representative of the Palestinian nation denotes the reality that irrespective of the results of the fresh efforts of Washington aimed at aiding the Zionist regime coming out of current deadlock, the intifadhah popular uprising will continue until the Palestinian nation's aspiration is achieved.

Christopher Visit Seen as 'Ceremonial'

LD2402075093 Tehran IRNA in English 0733 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA—An English daily said Wednesday [24 February] that the visit to the Middle East of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was more ceremonial than practical and that the Clinton administration was not willing to waste energy for the peace talks.

The 'TEHRAN TIMES' referred to the disorderly situation of the domestic U.S. economy in its editorial and said "Clinton prefers not to waste the energy of his administration for a vicious circle of talks."

Referring to Christopher's statements that he was to assess the views of all the involved factions, the daily said the standpoints of all sides were thoroughly obvious in each and every phase of the talks.

Turning to the promises made by the former U.S. Administration to the Arabs and the Zionist regime's unwillingness to give back the lands occupied in 1967 and 1980, the daily said Christopher's visit was intended to give "some kind of self-confidence" to the conservative Arab countries allied with the U.S.

"Furthermore, in case the talks are resumed, the Clinton administration will be exposed to further pressure to force Israel into abiding by the Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425, something which Clinton and his pro-Israel advisors do not go for," concluded the daily.

U.S. Strategy Aims To Put Arabs on Losing Side

LD2302134193 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1052 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Unattributed Commentary]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Greetings dear listeners. The continuation of the U.S. secretary of state's tour of the Middle East is the subject of today's first commentary.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Israel yesterday following his visits to Jordan, Egypt, Syria, [Saudi] Arabia, Kuwait, and Lebanon. The first round of his trip will probably be over after talks with the Zionist regime's officials. [passage omitted]. During these visits, the U.S. secretary of state has used every opportunity to underline the Arab sides' inclination to resume talks. [passage omitted]

Political analysts believe that Christopher's visit to the region aimed at pursuing the issue of resumption of the Arab-Israeli talks also encompasses other aspects, chiefly, that of appraising the United States' other objectives and interests in the region.

Leaders of Arab countries had been concerned about Clinton's excessive support for Israel during his election propaganda campaign. Hence the U.S. secretary of state was commissioned to alleviate such concerns.

The remarks made by Christopher on arrival in Israel served to outline the Clinton administration's strategy regarding the age-old Middle East crisis. He has said that merely ending the warlike situation between Israel and the Arabs is not sufficient, but Israel's total security must be established through various arrangements. In Christopher's opinion, the mere establishment of peace will not satisfy the United States and Israel, but they [the Arab

states] must welcome Israel as a neighbor by establishing full political and economic relations between the former enemies and the Arab governments. Thus, future relations between the United States and Israel, albeit governed by pressure and a frank diplomatic tone, will be the continuation of a strategy that places the Arab governments on the losing side. Particularly since it has become evident that the United States no longer intends to stay in its neutral observer role, but seeks to play the role of a full partner in the next Arab-Israeli talks; as was practised by the U.S. Democrats in 1978 during the first Camp David between Egypt and Israel.

New Zealand Foreign Minister Arrives for Visit

LD2202212193 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] New Zealand Foreign Minister Mr. McKinnon arrived in Tehran on Monday [22 February] evening at the head of a high-ranking delegation, at the invitation of our country's foreign minister. He was welcomed by the deputy foreign minister for Asia and Oceania.

On his arrival in Tehran, the New Zealand foreign minister referred to Iran's position in the sensitive Persian Gulf region. He added that relations between the two countries are very good.

Meets With President

LD2402112193 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani declared Iran's support for the formation of an international court of justice to try Serbs for their war crimes against the people of the Balkans. The president, who was speaking at a meeting this morning with the New Zealand foreign minister, pointed out: If the plan to form an international court and try Serbian criminals is implemented wisely and without caution and political motives, many ethnic and racial acts of aggression would be uprooted in the world. Referring to New Zealand's membership in the UN Security Council Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani said that the responsibility of that Council in accomplishing that task was very grave.

Referring to the existence of multiple ethnic groups and races in many countries in the world, the president said that the situation in the Balkans is difficult. He said: If the United Nations and the international community do not combat the vain issue of ethnic and racial prejudice in the world, seriously and in a concerted fashion, many countries, and even European countries, will sooner or later be faced with this cursed phenomenon and civil war. Then it will be too late.

Finally Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani said that the ties between Iran and New Zealand are good and welcomed further expansion of those ties.

At the meeting, which was also attended by Foreign Minister Velayati, Mr. McKinnon, the New Zealand foreign minister, expressed his happiness to be visiting Iran. He said: The Islamic Republic of Iran plays a major role in the maintenance of security and stability in the region. New Zealand wishes to expand her cooperation with Iran.

In response to our country's president's remarks on the crisis in the Balkans and the Serbian acts of aggression, the New Zealand foreign minister said: We agree with Iran's view that the court should act seriously and put the Serbian criminals on trial. The world must not allow the cruelties of the Serbian aggressors to be forgotten.

Meets Velayati, Departs

LD2402154493 Tehran IRNA in English 1408 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 24, IRNA—The foreign minister of New Zealand, Don McKinnon, wound up his three-day official visit to Iran Wednesday [24 February] and was seen off by his Iranian counterpart, 'Ali Akbar Velayati at the airport.

Minutes before his departure he told IRNA in an interview that the expulsion of the Palestinians by the Zionist regime had caused problems in the way of regional peace. Therefore, he stressed, the UN Security Council Resolution 799 concerning the deportees should be implemented.

In McKinnon's opinion the establishment of peace in the Middle East was more important than the recent deportation and therefore, he said the Security Council and New Zealand as a non-permament member concentrated all efforts on settling the former issue.

Velayati told IRNA that he had discussed mutual ties as well as international issues in two rounds of talks with McKinnon.

Pointing to New Zealand's membership in the Security Council and the various international and regional issues the council faced, Velayati said that Iran in the capacity of a powerful state in the region could help settle these problems.

According to the Iranian minister, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Iraq's internal affairs, the Persian Gulf region and the developments in Central Asia and Caucasia were also among the items discussed in the meetings.

Meanwhile, McKinnon before departure met with the minister of construction jihad, Gholam Reza Foruzesh, here Wednesday. In the meeting, the two officials explored avenues to boost mutual ties and cooperation.

Calling the bilateral economic cooperation "positive", Foruzesh said that Tehran-Wellington Joint Economic Commission would be held in New Zealand next June.

He expressed hope that the two sides would reach agreement on the purchase of meat, boosting of fisheries, supply of oil and non-oil products and exchange of university students in Ph.D. and M.A. levels.

Iraq Urged To Close File on Iranian POW's

LD2202114393 Tehran IRNA in English 1055 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA—An Iranian daily Monday [22 February] called on Iraq not to further delay the release of the remaining Iranian prisoners of war (POWs) in Iraq.

"It is clear that Tehran wants to close the Iraqi-imposed war's file on POWs and those missed in action (MIAs) for ever," the English daily KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL wrote in its editorial.

"However, it is not clear what motives and excuses are behind Baghdad's decision in obstructing measures in the way of the resolution of this problem."

"Without Iraqi cooperation the POW and MIA issues will not be solved, since this is not a one way street.... Baghdad should know that both Iran and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have concrete and undeniable evidence about the existence of additional Iranian POWs in Iraqi internment camps."

"Baghdad can no longer hide the remaining Iranian POWs in its soil. Holding a few hundreds or more Iranians will not bring about any bargaining benefit for Baghdad."

"Following his mistakes in staging wars against Iran, Kuwait and then his own people, Saddam Husayn is no longer a really legitimate leader in Iraq. Delaying the exchange of the remaining POWs will further deteriorate his already meager popularity among his people," concluded the editorial.

Velayati Asks Muslims To Send More Aid to Bosnia

LD2302094193 Tehran IRNA in English 0840 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Athens, Feb. 23, IRNA—Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati Monday [22 February] called on the Islamic world to send more aid and relief to the people of Bosnia-Hercegovina (B-H) during the fasting month of Ramadan, starting Tuesday.

"I think all Muslim countries should send humanitarian aid and relief to the Muslims in Bosnia more than before. Of course as far as Iran is concerned we have sent relief and aid to Bosnia, and also in many occasions we have tried to raise the issue in the various meetings of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)," Velayati told IRNA.

The Iranian foreign minister made a brief stopover in Athens Monday evening on his way back to Tehran after visiting Brazil, Mexico and Cuba.

Velayati said Iran is actively involved in the issue of B-H. He pointed [out] that recently he was in Pakistan on the occasion of the ministerial meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) where he met the secretary general of the OIC who was attending the inaugural ceremony.

"I reiterated that the Islamic world should do more, should take more positive steps for helping the B-H Muslims who are under the heavy pressure of the Serbs and they are suffering from their atrocities."

"We have been very active and in the future we will take more positive steps and also we wll keep in touch with the secretary general of OIC and Muslim countries which have been active since the beginning," he said.

The Iranian foreign minister said the former Yugoslav Republics should resolve their differences with neighbouring states as soon as possible.

"We think that all new republics of the former Yugoslavia should be independent on the basis of the desire of the people, but if there are some differences between some of these republics and other countries, specifically the neighbouring countries like Greece, they have to solve these problems." Velayati was referring to the Macedonian problem.

"If they cannot solve these differences it would become a chronic wound and it would not benefit the security in the region. We hope that they can solve their problems soon," he said.

Velayati described Greek-Iranian ties as "very good" and said bilateral relations have to be further strengthened.

Hizballah's Struggles Against Israelis Hailed

LD2002120793 Tehran IRNA in English 1050 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 20, IRNA—The Shiites in Lebanon need the support of the government and that of the rest of the Arab and Muslim world to win the war against the Zionists, wrote the 'TEHRAN TIMES' daily Saturday [20 February]. "If there are any prospects Arabs and Muslims should invest their hopes in, then it is in the potential power of their peoples not the pseudo expressions of support and pretensions to neutrality from dubiuos mediators," the editorial in the English daily said. It termed as a "promising sign" and "morale booster" to the Party of God, the recent call by Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri for strong support of the Shiite Muslims fighting Israeli forces in south Lebanon to end the occupation.

The paper regretted that Hizballah has been left alone during much of its struggle and noted that the U.S. and some European countries have often tried to force Damascus and Beirut to contain the Shiites and pave the way for the supposed success of the Mid-east peace process.

"The past six rounds of negotiations have achieved absolutely nothing for Arabs, and the Zionist regime remains as uncompromising as before, and completely disinterested in a negotiated settlement of the conflict."

"On the other hand, the daily struggle of the Palestinian Muslims in the occupied land, driven by the depth of their grievances and beliefs, has given way to unprecedented success in forcing Israel to come to terms with the reality of its occupation."

"The determination of Hizballah in southern Lebanon and the Shiite's unshakable sense of committment to the Palestinian aspiration, has added momentum to the struggle against the Zionists and promises imminent freedom and independence in both lands," the daily continued.

The decade old struggles of Hizballah, despite heavy losses it had suffered like the assassination of its leader last year, proved that it was a force to reckon with and not to be abandoned easily, the editorial concluded.

Joint Iranian-Romanian Economic Commission Meets

First Session Held

LD2102021093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] The first session of the joint Iranian-Romanian economic commission was held in Tehran today. Present at the session were the Romanian industry minister, Mr. Nezhad-Hoseynian, our country's heavy industries minister, and members of the Iranian-Romanian economic delegations.

In the course of the session, Mr. Nezhad-Hoseynian underlined the importance of joint investment by Iranian and Romanian companies and the mutual use of their facilities. He also stressed the need for provision of the facilities needed to expand cooperation among the Iranian and Romanian industrial production units.

The Romanian industries minister, for his part, emphasized the need to expand Iranian-Romanian cooperation.

Issues related to cooperation between the two countries with regard to construction of machinery, tractors, agricultural machinery, aircraft-building equipment, and also oil and gas were discussed at the meeting.

Romanian, Iranian Ministers Meet

LD2102184893 Tehran IRNA in English 1817 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA—Romania is keen on boosting agricultural cooperation with the Islamic republic, visiting Minister of Industries Dumitru Popescu told Iranian Agriculture Minister 'Isa Kalantari here today.

Popescu who is here to take part in the 9th Irano-Romanian joint economic commission briefed Kalantari on the impacts of the recent reforms in post-communist Romania.

In addition to cooperation in the field of agricultural machinery, Romania is willing to cooperate with Iran in the foodstuff industry, seed treatment and research as well as exchange of related information and experts, he added.

In return for imports of fruits, leather, cereals and pickled skins from Iran, Romania could supply meat and various kinds of seeds, Popescu proposed.

Kalantari welcomed the proposal and said the Islamic republic is ready to cooperate with Romania in the field of mutual interests and implement the agreement reached between the two countries especially in the agricultural sector.

President Meets Romanian Minister

LD2202111293 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani received today Romanian Industries Minister Popescu. In the meeting, which was also attended by Heavy Industries Minister Nezhad-Hoseynian, the Romanian industries minister submitted a written message from the Romanian president and said that, during his stay in Iran, he had held very useful talks with Iranian officials about cooperation in the fields of agriculture, industries, the construction of a cement factory, gas, and oil.

Popescu said that Romania is of the opinion that exchanging views at a high level with Iran will play an important role in the expansion of ties and cooperation between the two countries. Referring to issues related to the Balkans, he said that Romania is in favor of a political solution to the problems of that region.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani welcomed the expansion of ties between Iran and Romania and said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is keen to have wide-ranging cooperation with Romania in the fields of politics, commerce, and industry. In conclusion, the president expressed the hope that Romania would strive for a resolution of the problems of the Balkans.

Cooperation Agreement Signed

LD2202111893 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] The ninth session of the joint Iran-Romanian cooperation commission ended in Tehran today, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding on economic, commercial, and technical cooperation between Romania and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The memorandum of understanding was signed in Tehran today by Heavy Industries Minister Mohammad Hadi Nezhad-Hoseynian and Romanian Industry Minister Dumitru Popescu.

According to our correspondent, the memorandum of understanding incorporates ways to resolve the remaining issues dating back to the time of barter trade between the

two countries, further Romanian cooperation toward the supply of spare parts needed by the Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing Factory, cement production projects in Qa'en and Bujnurd, and also ways to expand bilateral economic relations.

Our correspondent notes that the Islamic Republic of Iran exported approximately $480 million worth of oil and other commodities to Romania and imported $121 million worth of commodities from that country, in the course of 1992—Dey 1370 to Dey 1371 [22 December 91 to 22 December 92].

Kazakhstan Minister Discusses Refugee Issues

LD2102120093 Tehran IRNA in English 0924 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA—The Kazakh minister of labor, Sayat D. Beysenov, and Iran's deputy labor minister for socio-political affairs, Mohammad Atrian-Far, here Saturday [20 February] disussed the fate of Kazakh refugees in Iran.

Nearly 5,000 Kazakhs, half of them from Afghan origin, fled to Iran when the communists seized power in Kazakhstan. They live in northern Iran.

Atrian-Far announced Iran's readiness to help the Kazakh refugees living in Iran to return to their native country.

Referring to the important role Kazakhstan played in the region as well as among the newly independent states, Atrian-Far said that relations with Alma-Ata was of great importance to Iran.

Pointing to the living condition of Kazakh refugees in Iran compared with those in Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, Beysenov thanked Tehran for granting equal rights to Kazakh refugees.

Memorandum of Understanding Signed

LD2102143493 Tehran IRNA in English 1359 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA—A memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation was signed here Sunday between the visiting Kazakh Labor Minister Sayat D. Beysenov and his Iranian counterpart Hoseyn Kamali.

According to the document Tehran and Alma-Ata will cooperate in technical and vocational training and work safety measures.

Beysenov heading a delegation arrived here last Friday [19 February].

Interior Ministry on Refugees

LD2202165393 Tehran IRNA in English 1507 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA—The return of the Iranian Kazakhs to the Republic of Kazakhstan depends on their wish and readiness as well as completion of legal formalities, Interior Ministry announced here Monday [22 February].

It said out of 5,000 Kazakhs living in Iran, 2,700 hold Iranian nationality, and their return depends on their wish and readiness and completion of formalities. These Kazakhs hold Iranian identity cards and live in the northern parts of the country.

Some 2,700 Kazakhs residing in Iran hold Afghan nationality, whose return to Kazakhstan rests with their will and agreement of their government, the ministry said.

The Kazakhs holding Afghan nationality sought refuge in Iran after communists took power in Afghanistan.

* Velayati Reprimanded for Inappropriate Remarks

93AS0580C London KEYHAN in Persian 4 Feb 93 p 12

[Text] Once again differences of opinion over the assessment of American policy have produced heated discussions among the leaders of the Islamic Republic, of course secretly and behind the scenes.

While George Bush was ordering the bombing of missile launching platforms in Iraq in the final days of his leadership, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, the Islamic Republic's foreign minister, was in Europe. Probably under the influence of the environment that existed in Europe, he said that the bombing of the missile launching platforms was "understandable" and that it did not deserve a reprimand. Other voices were heard in Tehran, however. Not only Musavi Ardebili, who is not taken that seriously, but also 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who is taken seriously, attacked the air strikes by the Persian Gulf war allies against the Iraqi missiles near the 32d parallel in the south and the 36th parallel in the north, and Rafsanjani described them as "shameful."

Informed sources in Tehran say that because of this 'Ali Akbar Velayati was summoned before the Security Council and asked to explain why he spoke on his own on a subject of this importance without consulting with Tehran. It is interesting that Rafsanjani himself led the way in criticizing the foreign minister in order to prevent opponents of his government from dragging the issue into the Majles and creating a new uproar.

The same circles say that the new Russian-French policy towards Iraq not only has made Saddam Husayn bolder in his resistance against America, but the Islamic Republic also thinks that with the emergence of a rift between Russia and the United States, it has found new room to maneuver in its foreign policy.

Some political analysts have cautioned Tehran's leaders that they must not be led into misgivings on this account, because if anti-American resistance becomes stronger in the region, Saddam Husayn more than anyone else will seize the initiative as its "hero," and also because today's Russia is not that former Soviet Union, and it cannot

establish a policy and maneuver based on the positions of its president of the republic. Those who are more pessimistic say that Yeltsin has distanced himself from America's policy in the region in order to extract the price he wants to be paid for cooperating, and naturally if such a deal is made the Islamic Republic will get nothing.

About 115,000 Pilgrims Expected To Go to Mecca

LD2002231093 Tehran IRNA in English 1827 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 20, IRNA—About 115,000 Iranians will go on hajj pilgrimage to Mecca this year in periodic flights from six Iranian airports from May 4 through May 25th.

Flights to Mecca and Medinah will be made from Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, Kerman and Tabriz.

Iranian hajj supervisors will be stationed in Mecca and Medina in order to help Iranian pilgrims with their lodgings and their other affairs.

Head of Hajj and Pilgrimage Affairs Organization Mohammad Hoseyn Reza'i told the Persian daily ETTELA'AT today that the government had frequently negotiated with Saudi officials for a higher quota for pilgrims from Iran, but that because of various problems, including the new urban planning system in Mecca which had made housing in that city even more limited it was the expectation did not materialize.

He said about 10 per cent of the Iranians flying to Mecca will be assigned supervisors and officials whose task it will be to help the Iranian pilgrims in the two holy cities.

According to Reza'i the flesh of sheep to be sacrificed by Iranian and other pilgrims in Mecca this year will be sent to Muslims in other countries. The arrangement, he said, would be undertaken in collaboration with the Islamic Bank.

The official added that any Iranian wishing to go on pilgrimage to Mecca without having to wait for the normal stand-by period he might do so by paying rls [rials] 3,500,000 in cash, and others wishing to curtail their waiting at their normal stand-by list go on pilgrimage earlier than the already assigned date could do so by paying rls 1,500,000 over and above the normal charges payable for pilgrimage to Mecca.

In related news, the hajj and pilkgrimage official remarked, Iranians previously enrolled in a list for visiting holy shrines in Syria would be flown to Syria in periodic flights as of today.

Dostam Envoy Visits, Urges Refugee Return

LD2102021393 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Mr. Mohammad Mohaqqeq, the head of the provincial council of Mazar and the military deputy of General Dostam, has called on the scientific, specialist, and cultural forces of Afghanistan to return to their country to rebuild it.

Mr. Mohaqqeq, who is visiting Iran at the head of a high-ranking delegation from the Nationalist-Islamic Movement of Northern Afghanistan, at the invitation of our country's Foreign Ministry, said in an interview with the Central News Unit in Mashhad: One of the aims of my visit to Mashhad is to encourage expert, specialist, and cultural forces to return to Afghanistan and, in view of the initiation of reconstruction programs and the established conditions of stability and security in Afghanistan's northern provinces, there is an urgent and vital need for the presence of these forces.

He expressed the hope that he would be able to take back to Afghanistan a number of refugees for that purpose.

In conclusion, the head of the delegation from the Nationalist-Islamic Movement of Afghanistan condemned the tragedies and crimes perpetrated by armed bandits against the innocent and defenseless residents of western Kabul and asked that the offenders be arrested and tried.

Refugees Seek Dismissal of Rabbani Government

LD2002161393 Tehran IRNA in English 1438 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb 20, IRNA—Some 7,000 Afghan refugees gathered in front of the bureau of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami (Islamic Unity Party), IUP, here Friday [19 February] demanding putting on trial those responsible for the recent crimes in western Kabul as war criminals. They said Afghan President Borhannodin Rabbani, Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and head of the Ettehad-e Eslami were responsible for the crimes.

According to the IUP officials, forces of 'Abdorrab Rasul Sayyaf, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and the Supervisory Council massacred innocent Shiite Muslims on February 11 in Afshar and Chendovol region and raped Muslim women.

In a 4-point resolution, calling the Afghan Government illegal, the demonstrators appealed to the United Nations, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Islamic countries and mujahideen groups to reconsider their relations with what they called the "illegal Afghan government" and help the Afghan nation.

The representative council of the IUP also issued a statement here Friday denouncing massacre of Muslims and calling for dismissal of Rabbani government.

Afghan Minister Requests Cultural Assistance

LD2202171393 Tehran IRNA in English 1644 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA—Afghanistan's acting Minister of Higher Education Abdul-Fattah Nazir today hailed Iran's aid to the Afghan Mojahedin and refugees over the past 14 years.

Common historical, cultural and religious grounds particularly Persian the common language of the two countries are factors of the cultural link between Iran and Afghanistan, he told Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Ala'eddin Borujerdi.

Nazir who is currently visiting Iran referred to the massive destruction in Afghanistan during the communist era and hoped that the Islamic republic will not spare any cultural assistance to universities and educational centers in his country.

Borujerdi in reply said restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan is the most important need of the hour.

He termed the crimes committed in Kabul last week by armed bands against defenceless civilians as "black episode in the contemporary history of Afghanistan."

Last week forces loyal to Abdur-Rasul Sayyaf burst into houses of mostly Shiite citizens in the Afghan capital, killing men, molesting women and kidnapping several girls.

Borujerdi expressed hope that universities and other educational centers of the two countries would be able to expand mutual cooperation.

Joint Iran-Pakistan Policy on Afghanistan Urged

NC2102110993 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 9 Feb 93 p 16

[Ahmad 'Azizi commentary: "Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan"]

[Text] Afghanistan's jihad forces have chosen the logic of the bullet instead of talks and understanding in the division of power and the establishment of rule. Unfortunately the process of forming coalitions in this unhealthy conflict also is detached from historic, political, and ethnic realities and does not conform with the intentions of the Afghan groups. Apart from threatening the lives of innocent people, the escalation of violence and insecurity also poses a serious threat to regional stability and, moreover, to the interests of neighboring countries and especially Iran and Pakistan.

Apart from the fact that Iran and Pakistan are harmed by this situation, they also have a common interest in Afghanistan's stability and development. First and foremost, the continuation of the crisis in the Afghan Government can become a pretext for the direct presence of the United States and the West near the two countries' northern and eastern border areas. Also, with the emergence of new patterns, the ground has been paved for intervention for so-called humanitarian purposes within the framework of the new world order. This presence is dangerous not only for Iran and Pakistan, but for the entire region in view of the sensitive situation on the northern border. The continuation of the refugee problem for both countries, which have witnessed instability in their border provinces for years, and the heavy burden of economic problems stemming from the many millions of refugees cannot be neglected. Meanwhile, an effective fight against smuggling—and especially drug smuggling—calls for secure borders and cooperation with a stable government in Afghanistan. Afghanistan needs reconstruction and economic development that conforms with the interests of Iran and Pakistan. The two countries' sincere efforts to achieve this end benefit all three countries. Without a stable Afghanistan, Pakistan cannot have an effective link with Central Asia and this stability also is necessary for advancing the objectives of the Economic Cooperation Organization, ECO. Cooperation between the two countries is in the interest of the newly independent countries in the north and prevents some unhealthy rivalries. The potentials and resources offered by Iran in this regard benefit Pakistan.

Iran and Pakistan definitely cannot achieve their common goals in an atmosphere of suspicion with policies that do not harmonize, and even worse, amidst a power struggle. The two countries' constructive diplomacy based on their good relations with the Afghan Government and the pivotal forces in Afghanistan's political scene should pave the way for the forces which played a basic role in the Afghan jihad—and especially the Jami'at-e Eslami, Hezb-e Eslami, Hezb-e Vahdat-e Eslami, and the Northern Movement up to a certain extent—to have a just role in a broad-based Afghan government. Lasting stability in Afghanistan cannot be achieved by removing any of these groups. Those who ignore the profound regional developments which occurred during the Afghan jihad and the growth of new forces on the political scene and are trying to revive the historic pattern of rule in Afghanistan will only escalate tension and instability for the oppressed people of Afghanistan and the region. Collective, active Iranian-Pakistani diplomacy next to Afghanistan should block those who are using the pretext of unity but are resorting to conflicts and discord.

Clerics Call on People To Join Marches

NC2002190593 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 9 Feb 93 p 2

[Text] The Tehran Militant Clergy Association issued a statement on the occasion of 11 February, the Day of God [Yowm- Allah], stressing that the active and unified participation of our Muslim revolutionary nation in the marches on this historic day is a religious and national obligation. In addition to declaring willingness for extensive participation in these ceremonies, the statement included the following remarks on the most important issues pertaining to the revolution and the Islamic world:

"Freedom" is the most esteemed gain of the Islamic Revolution and it has been attained with the blessings of the blood of the martyrs and the amazing selflessness of the pure offspring of this nation. Today our nation is the freest nation in the world and will never succumb to the pressure of the powerful and belligerent ones. Political freedom in our country paints the image of a free nation and only those who are in league with the conspirators of the world to plot against our nation are deprived of this freedom.

The Militant Clergy Association has stressed that the ploy of human rights used by the powers of world arrogance is not something that can in any way undermine even an iota of the greatness, purity, and steadfastness of our revolution. The supporters of the counterrevolution are in fact the greatest violators of human rights themselves. They are distressed by the vast extent of political and individual freedom enjoyed in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is because this extensive freedom calls into question their own spurious democracy.

The statement says independence is another gracious gain of the Islamic Revolution, adding: The system's foreign policy relies on the decrees of the leadership and the valuable exhortations of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran; its brilliant lines paint a beautiful image of an independent country.

The statement stresses the triumphant continuation of the magnificent Islamic Revolution after 14 years of plots, coups d'etat, war, and economic embargoes. Elaborating on the swiftly proliferating Islamic uprisings, it states: Today, because of the aspirations of that hallowed soul [Khomeyni], we are proud to be witnesses to the greatest Islamic uprisings from the westernmost shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the easternmost coast of the Indian Ocean.

The Militant Clergy Association then emphasizes that our system has emerged as the most efficient one in the world because of three factors: The leadership, the people, and moving on the basis of the vitalizing tenets of Islam.

The statement continues by enumerating the economic gains of the revolution: Today the enemy believes that we are an insolvent and destructible nation. Some feeble-minded people who are under the influence of such notions presume that we would gain something by establishing ties with the United States. They are unaware that the governments that have sold their honor and prestige to the United States have not made any conquests or gains. When the revolution took place, we were ready to stand on our feet when the criminal United States imposed an unequal and barbaric war on our oppressed nation to compensate for the downfall of the shah.

Despite all this treachery and wickedness, the economic condition of our country is the most satisfactory of those countries, which do not have even a fraction of our problems. You can see the newly independent countries to the north of our country, even Russia, as an example. The people are living in the most pitiful conditions. In most of the Third World countries, the economic conditions are not very favorable because of the merciless pillage by the despotic powers of the world. In Europe, the United States, and industrial countries, only a small percentage of the people live comfortably while the rest wallow in penury and deprivation.

The statement then says: Statistics indicate that the achievements of the Islamic Revolution in housing, health, education, training, and other amenities of life are so dazzling that there is no comparison with the lowly Pahlavi regime. Our economic system has reached self-sufficiency in petrochemicals, steel, aluminum, etc.

In continuation of its statement, the Militant Clergy Association discusses women and their status in the revolution and the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, asserting: With the advent of the Islamic Revolution, Iranian women have shown themselves internationally as paragons of purity and chastity. The revolution swathed the luminescent pearl, that is woman, within the luster of the hejab [Islamic veil] so that she should remain safe from any defilement from filth and abomination. At the same time, she was elevated to the lofty levels of the economic, social, cultural, artistic, political, and even military spheres so that she could play her role in performing her divine and humane mission.

This victory is the reason for the malice of the enemies of Islam. The enemy endeavors to depict a dark and bleak picture of the Iranian and Muslim women, ignorant of the fact that the noble women of the world will never be deceived by their propaganda. The increase in the number of women wearing Islamic attire in Islamic countries and even in non-Islamic countries is evidence that their plots have been foiled.

The spiritual and cultural growth of the people was mentioned in the statement of the Militant Clergy Association's statement as another of the accomplishments of the Islamic Revolution:

The veering of the people toward divinity and the divine hues that have tinged the lives of people are the deepest gains of the Islamic Revolution. The spirit of cooperation and assistance that has emerged in the noble Iranian nation has not only affected their own compatriots within the country but has also influenced the fate of Muslims and other people in other countries in a very sensitive manner and this is part of its feedback.

The statement then dwells on the cultural revolution in the universities, developments in radio, television, the theater, and publications, and the revision of textbooks as further gains of the cultural revolution, adding: A revolution in the cultural field has conquered many great summits. To compensate for its massive defeats, the enemy is seeking to open a chapter in a serious imbroglio with the revolution and the interpretation of the leader of the revolution; this chapter is the same one under discussion as the cultural onslaught. Our venerable nation should be vigilant and destroy this onslaught trench by trench and should assert its presence valiantly in the various arenas.

The statement then refers to the future of the revolution: Now our system is the most stable of all those in today's agitated world, at a time when governments and nations are burning in the throes of nationalistic unrest, racial differences, and lack of a durable ideology. The 14 years of constant hardships and tribulations that we have endured warn us that the rest of the path should be traversed with the same alertness. We should not permit a love of luxury and extravagance to block the path of our nation's piety and contentment.

In conclusion, the statement once again refers to the 11 February marches, saying: The grandiose marches of 11 February are in fact a repeated referendum, which takes place every year for the affirmation of the loyalty of the people toward the system that comes in view of the entire world. The throngs of millions on the streets are sharp arrows in the eyes of the enemies of Islam who are still harboring malice, jealousy, and avarice in their hearts.

Rebel Radio Views Regime's 'Political Crisis'

NC2202120493 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1730 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Unattributed commentary: "The Regime's Crisis Deepens"]

[Text] Esteemed listeners: The political crisis confronting the clerical regime for some time now is becoming deeper and deeper with time. General dissatisfaction is mounting daily, the rift in the regime is becoming more and more overt, competitiveness and struggles among the various factions of the mullahs' government are manifesting themselves more clearly, and the nation's socioeconomic situation is more serious than ever. These are all clear indications that the regime's political crisis is approaching an explosive climax.

The wide crack that has appeared in the foundations of the clerical regime's administration and the dissatisfaction and general displeasure among the people, the freedom seekers, and the workers expresses itself daily in the form of utter loathing and disgust.

This disgust and discontentment is apparent in the educational institutions, universities, workshops and factories, in streets and corners, in the bazaars, in the taxis and buses, and in residential areas. In brief, one can say that currently most of the people are politically opposed to the regime, whose echelons are well aware of this and are in a state of bewilderment trying to find a way to mitigate this dissatisfaction in some way or another.

How can they do this? From the outset, they inflicted all kinds of pressure and repression on the people. They utilized all the tactics of deceit, fraud, and conspiracy. In fact, they left no stone unturned in their attempts to hoodwink the people. The fact is that the regime is incapable, politically and otherwise, of resolving the country's political dilemmas and the miscellaneous difficulties of the people. It cannot forge any friendly relations or ties with other countries and cannot continue to dupe the people at home.

The people have awakened to the retrogressive, reactionary, and anti-popular nature of the regime. Even its supporters are distancing themselves more and more with time.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani's programs and policies, which he claimed would solve all the nation's social, political and economical problems, do not seem to have cured the people's woes. The regime's crisis has deepened so greatly that internal dissent and discord has placed it in a dreadful position. The fact that Montazeri's home was attacked and surrounded is another indication of the beginning of a new era in the clerics' internal tussle.

The trend of events is indicative of the fact that the regime will once again resort to repression, strangulation, and pressure to preserve its existence. However, such suffocation and duress will not extricate it from its current enmeshed straits. The policy of repression and suffocation can only deepen the regime's crisis.

Past experience has proven that the regime cannot surmount this political predicament by political maneuvering, suppression, or repression. The crisis is becoming deeper and wider by day. In light of the international situation and the political and economic situation confronting Iran at home, there is no doubt that this crisis will soon become a general nationwide debacle and the entire structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be completely encompassed by it and will be shaken to the core.

Greater Cooperation Among ECO Countries Urged

NC2202102193 Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian 14 Feb 93 pp 10, 12

[M. Mollazadeh commentary: "The Quetta Conference"]

[Excerpts] Quetta in Pakistan's Balochistan Province was the venue of the conference of the foreign ministers of the ten member-countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] on 6 and 7 February. [passage omitted]

In a realistic assessment of the current status of economic cooperation among the member-countries—including the old members Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey and the new members Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and the five Central Asian countries—we can say that despite the favorable grounds that exist, this cooperation has not been up to a satisfactory standard. There are various reasons for this, not all of which are economic. Part of these reasons concern political outlooks. Each one of the founding countries has economic relations with countries outside the ECO framework. These relations are far more extensive than their economic relations within the ECO framework. Even though this situation has economic justifications that cannot be ignored, nevertheless no serious effort to alter this situation—even in the long run—can be seen.

It is true that the economies of the three founding members are more or less similar and face some limitations as far as meeting mutual needs are concerned. Nevertheless, economic relations within ECO's framework have not expanded as much as they could with the given possibilities and potential. The limited border markets that have been set up in neighboring provinces such as western Azerbaijan with Turkey and Sistan va Baluchestan with Pakistan are a far cry from an Islamic common market. The only change that has taken place is that the consumer goods that were exchanged in these border markets in limited quantities in the past are no longer smuggled, but are exchanged under government control. [passage omitted]

To create an active common market, a mixture of political determination and economic realities is necessary. Such a market cannot be formed through slogans alone. If we regard ECO in its current form, which includes a variety of nations and a variety of differences, we will see that it is very difficult to achieve the goals that have been set. Let us look at Central Asia as an example. Central Asia is a virgin market with the possibility to expand. Many of its products are greatly needed by regional markets and it also offers a market that can absorb a considerable quantity of goods produced by regional countries within the ECO framework. Central Asia is thirsting for a change in its methods of trade that was once carried out through Russia. The question is: By what routes can it expand its relations with the ECO members? Afghanistan is the most natural link. Pakistan expected that with the victory of the jihad in Afghanistan it could build a railway linking Central Asia to Pakistan and especially to Karachi Port along the Salang-Kabul-Jalalabad highway. But the continuation of the war has foiled these sweet dreams. There is talk in Iran about the construction of the Sarakhs-Central Asia railway, which will be linked to the national Iranian railway network. When this project will be completed remains to be seen. But while Iran and Pakistan are pondering possible links, China and South Korea have actively entered the scene in Central Asia and the markets in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan are now at the disposal of these two countries. [passage omitted]

Each one of the ECO member-nations has potential and resources which, if recognized and tapped, can prove to be very effective in meeting mutual needs within the ECO framework. Of course, one cannot doubt the fact that as far as advanced technology and large industries are concerned, the ECO cannot meet all needs. But it can effectively do so on the level of agricultural products, handicrafts, and small industries. [passage omitted]

In short, despite all its problems, once the ECO is able to create strong bonds among its members it can also form a strong basis for a common Islamic market. This extremely important goal should be the topic of discussion in all the conferences and talks, irrespective of their level.

Companies To Get Greater Share of Oil Projects

LD2002161993 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Excerpts] A seminar to study and assess the ability to design and construct oil refineries in Iran started its work today in Tehran. [passage omitted]

The seminar emphasized the need for the greater utilization of the technical expertise of Iranian companies and subcontractors in various industrial projects of the oil industry. Our correspondent reports:

[Correspondent] In this seminar, Dorri-Najafabadi, chairman of the Plan and Budget Committee [of the Majles], called for the use of national will in the design and construction of refineries by domestic forces. Mohsen Yahyavi, chairman of the Oil Commission of the Islamic Consultative Majles, for his part praised the experts of Iran's oil industry in the reconstruction of war-damaged refineries of the country and extinguishing the oil well fires of Kuwait. He said: The Islamic Consultative Majles has allocated 30 percent of the foreign currency budget of a number of large oil and gas industry projects to give priority to Iranian companies and institutions active in the design and construction of these projects.

In this seminar, Heavy Industries Minister Nezhad-Hoseynian said: Currently 80 to 85 percent of the oil industry's projects are being carried out by foreign subcontractors with currency costs. The share of Iranian companies and subcontractors must increase to 80 percent and 20 percent of the projects must be carried out by foreign companies with technical expertise. He added: Currently 1 billion dollars is allocated for the import of around 11 types of commodities needed by the oil industry's projects. With the participation of foreign institutions and by the use of their standards, we can produce these goods inside the country with a cost of 250 million dollars. The heavy industries minister called for an end to customs exemptions and commercial benefit tax for the imports of government institutions so that the said institutions pay greater attention primarily to domestic resources.

In this seminar, the head of Iran's chemical engineers and the head of Iran's Scientific and Industrial Research Organization proposed: To utilize domestic resources in the design and construction of refineries, a small refinery with a capacity of 25,000 to 30,000 barrels should be designed and constructed by domestic companies and subcontractors in the first instance and the experiences derived from this venture should be used in other projects of the oil industry.

Newspaper Report on Wage Increases Evaluated

NC2102102793 Tehran SALAM in Persian 15 Feb 93 p 2

[Editorial: "Increase or Reduction in Salaries?!"]

[Excerpts] One of the criticisms against SALAM is that it does not publish positive reports. Despite the fact that many of the newspaper's reports have positive features, nevertheless at a time when many of the positive news items are completely negative in nature, how can one expect to satisfy the expectations of the respectable critics? To be more specific, we cite the following example.

Yesterday HAMSHAHRI devoted its second headline to news of a 23.8 percent increase in civil servant salaries. This report cited an interview with the head of the Plan and Budget Organization's Macroeconomics Department. The news was so hot that two afternoon newspapers that are competing over which one opposes HAMSHAHRI the most also cited it. One of the two newspapers carried a full text of the report citing HAMSHAHRI, while the other thought that citing HAMSHAHRI would not be advisable and thus cited the Plan and Budget Organization's Public Relations Department.

Incomes for civil servants during the coming [Iranian] year [starting 21 March 1993] will increase by an average of 23.8 percent. But 17.8 percent of this increase is the payment of back salaries which the government owes civil servants from 1370 [year beginning 21 March 1991], while the other 6 percent is the usual annual wage increase through promotions and other benefits. [passage omitted]

In view of this, what has happened to the president's promise that wages will increase in proportion with the growth in inflation? Will inflation this year not be nearly 30 percent and at least the same next year? Therefore, if salaries remain stable, this will mean a 40 percent drop in the people's purchasing power. Meanwhile, what does the repayment of money owed to civil servants from 1370 mean? Does this not mean that the value of this money will be 40 percent less? Therefore, under such conditions, can one not say that not only will there not be an increase, but that the value of the money owed to civil servants from 1370 will reduce by 40 percent?

We hope that in the future more attention will be paid to facts and figures so there will not be unexpected and unrealistic expectations and so that if the civil servants do not receive a wage increase, they will at least not suffer from the consequences of the inflation which may be triggered by such propaganda.

Armenian Clerics Deny Discrimination Allegations

LD2002165593 Tehran IRNA in English 1531 GMT 20 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 20, IRNA—Armenian archbishops in a statement here today denounced as "unfounded" the arrogant media's propaganda of alleged human rights violations in Islamic Iran.

The statement said whenever the issue of human rights arises in world forums, vested interests try to drag in the Islamic Republic alleging ill-treatment of religious minorities, with opportunists exploiting the issue politically and to their own interest. It referred to the freedom of Armenians in performing their religious rites in Iran and termed as "baseless and unfounded" the propaganda launched against the Islamic Republic of showing discrimination against its Armenian citizens.

The statement was signed by Archbishop Ardak Manukian, archdiocese for Tehran and the northern parts, Archbishop Kryon Papian, archdiocese for Esfahan and the southern parts, and Neshan Topozian archdiocese for Azarbaijan.

"The Islamic Republic's constitution respects the rights of 200,000 Iranian Armenians thus guaranteeing their security," it underlined. Iranian Armenians, it concluded, besides having religious freedoms have special institutions and take part in efforts to develop the Islamic Republic and provide welfare of the Iranian nation.

Pakistan

Ministry Says Indian Preconditions 'Unfortunate'

BK2402121693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] Pakistan has described as most unfortunate the preconditions placed by the Indian president for dialogue with Pakistan on the outstanding problems between the two countries. A foreign office spokesman said in Islamabad today that Mr. Nawaz Sharif had recently offered resumption of dialogue with India on all outstanding issues. But, he pointed out that it was most unfortunate that, in his address to Parliament yesterday, the Indian president had again placed preconditions for a dialogue. The spokesman also described as unfortunate the attacks made by the Indian president on Pakistan in his address. He said, as usual, India is trying to externalize its international problems by putting the blame on Pakistan. The spokesman said it is cyrstal- clear to the world community that it is India which is responsible for the difficulties in relation between the two countries as it remained unwilling to resolve disputes with Pakistan in accordance with Simla agreement.

Sharif 'Satisfied' With Kabul Cease-Fire

BK2102025493 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has sent an important message to Afghanistan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, expressing satisfaction with the current cease-fire for which he had made a sincere appeal earlier. The message was handed to the Afghan president in Kabul yesterday by Pakistani Ambassador Amir Usman. In the message, Nawaz Sharif expressed hope that efforts will be made to ensure a permanent and durable cease-fire in order to end the hardships being faced by the residents of Kabul.

President Rabbani asked the Pakistani ambassador to convey his thanks to the prime minister for his message of

good wishes and for his constant interest in the welfare and well-being of the Afghan people. He also reiterated that all possible efforts will be made to end the current fighting so permanent peace will be restored to Afghanistan. The Pakistani ambassador will also meet other Afghan leaders to ensure that the current cease-fire becomes a permanent feature.

Nawaz Sharif on Need for Inter-Party Negotiations

BK2202093393 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 22 Feb 93

[Text] Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has said that his government believes in consultations and better understanding with all political parties in order to resolve all problems facing the nation. He was talking to newsmen before boarding his helicopter at (Tando Yaro) in Naushahro Firoz District of Sindh yesterday. The prime minister said that he has stressed the need for negotiations from the outset so as to resolve political issues and to create a conducive atmosphere for the government and other political parties in which they can play positive and practical roles. He said that confrontation is not the solution of issues, because it only creates bitterness and misunderstanding.

In reply to a question about the government's understanding with Benazir Bhutto, the People's Democratic Alliance leader, the prime minister said that I firmly believe in democratic values and this is why I have been trying from the beginning to secure the cooperation of political parties and cooperation of their leaders. The prime minister said that negotiations are important for the stability of democracy and that he will continue to strive to secure the cooperation of the opposition in the greater interests of the country.

Muslim League on Constitution Amendment Bill

BK2102031093 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 21 Feb 93

[Text] At its meeting in Islamabad yesterday, the Pakistan Muslim League parliamentary party in the National Assembly authorized the prime minister to make decisions on matters regarding the Constitution Eighth Amendment Bill [empowering the president to dissolve the National Assembly and dismiss the government] and the nomination of a candidate for the next presidential election. Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, who presided over the meeting, assured the party that he will make decisions in this regard at an appropriate time after consultations.

Abdul Sattar Lalika, the federal minister for information and broadcasting, briefing journalists on the decisions reached at the meeting, said the meeting also empowered the prime minister to solicit opinions of other parties in this respect. The party also authorized the prime minister to decide on the construction of the Kalabagh Dam, which is a technical problem. Answering a question, Abdul Sattar Lalika said all party members have been advised not to comment on matters concerning the nomination of the presidential candidate and the Constitution Eighth Amendment Bill. It was also decided that the Pakistan Muslim League parliamentary party meeting should be held from time to time and as party leader, the prime minister should also hold consultations with the Senate members. Nawaz Sharif advised chairmen of the different standing committees of the National Assembly to assess the performances of the relevant ministries and recommend measures, wherever necessary, to improve them. He advised them to submit their reports not only to the concerned ministers but also to the prime minister.

The parliamentary party meeting decided to organize the Pakistan Muslim League in Sindh, northwest Frontier Province, and Balochistan on the pattern of the organizational structure of the party in Punjab Province. The meeting also approved a resolution, moved by National Assembly Member retired Major Aftab Daha, expressing full support for the prime minister's economic policies and lauding Nawaz Sharif's services and efforts to mitigate the suffering of the flood-affected people, to distribute land among landless peasants in Sindh, and to accelerate the pace of national reconstruction works. Answering a question, the information minister said that about 120 members, including those belonging to the Jamaat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, took part in the meeting.

Defense Delegation Leaves for Bulgaria, Italy

BK2302154093 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] A five-member delegation led by Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, the minister for defense production, left for Karachi on way to Sofia on a week-long visit to Bulgaria and Italy. Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani talked to newsmen before his departure and said that during the four-day visit to Bulgaria, they will have discussions on joint ventures in defense production. The minister said he is carrying a message from Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif to his Bulgarian counterpart. He said the delegation will stay in Italy for two days on the way back. There the delegation will see a prototype of an airborne radar being manufactured by an Italian company, which would be installed on Mirage aircraft.

Swedish Team, Bijarani Discuss Submarine Sale

BK2302150693 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] Mr. (Rontauz Allen Carlson), political adviser of the Swedish Government; and Mr. (Perti Uhani Kimrunin), senior vice president of Kockums Submarines; called on the minister of defense production, Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, in Islamabad today. They were accompanied by the Swedish ambassador, Mr. Anre Faltheim. The visiting team assured continued cooperation in the matter of high-tech defense equipment, especially the latest model of submarines. Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani assured the delegation that the offer made by the Swedish manufacturer of

submarines will be carefully considered along with similar offers from some other countries. The schedule of the submarine's delivery in case of an agreement and the transfer of technology were also discussed.

Minister, PRC Delegation Discuss Oil Exploration

BK2302150793 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 23 Feb 93

[Text] The federal minister for petroleum and natural resources and special assistant to the prime minister, Chaudhary Nissar Ali Khan, has said there exists a tremendous potential for collaboration in the field of oil exploration between Pakistan and China. He was talking to Mr. Qin Anmen, president and leader of the China Petroleum Engineering Construction Corporation delegation, which met him in Islamabad today. Chaudhary Nissar said the government has extended massive incentives to foreign exploration companies through the country's first-ever petroleum policy to accelerate the pace of oil exploration. Mr. Qin Anmen gave a brief resume to the minister regarding the functioning of his corporation and the petroleum industry of China.

Sri Lanka

Security Forces Destroy LTTE Jaffna Positions

BK2402121893 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 Feb 93

[Text] LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists suffered heavy casualties and many of their bunkers and enemy positions were destroyed yesterday when infantry troops of the Operation Ranadiwe broke out to destroy terrorist fortifications ahead of the western forward defenses in the Jaffna District. The Joint Operations Command told LANKAPUVATH that troops backed by air, sea, and artillery support broke out from the western forward defenses and advanced toward Madagal with a view to destroying fortifications in the area. The advancing troops were fired upon by small groups of terrorists occupying prepared positions. But, with the onslaught of the advancing troops they abandoned their positions and fled further east. During initial stage of the advance, terrorists brought in reinforcements in a bid to halt the security forces. Several tractors and other vehicles bringing in reinforcements were detected and effectively engaged by fighter ground attack aircrafts inflicting heavy casualties. Meanwhile, naval crafts covering the sea front pounded terrorist positions and fortifications along the coastal line causing heavy damages. Ground troops destroyed many underground bunkers and prepared positions in about 10 well fortified houses occupied by the terrorists.